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ABSTRACT

The Minorities and Communication section of the Proceedings contains the following 15 papers: "An Analysis of Role Portrayal in U.S. Spanish-Language Television Promotional Announcements" (Jami J. Armstrong and Alice Kendrick); "A Critical Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Native Americans by 'The Daily Oklahoman' Newspaper for 1998" (Dianne Lamb); "Japanese-American Internment Redress and Reparations: A Pilot Study of Media Coverage by the 'Los Angeles Times' and 'Washington Post'--1986-1999" (Joy Y. Nishie); "Third-Person Perception and Optimistic Bias among Urban Minority 'At-Risk' Youth" (John Chapin); "Exclusion, Denial, and Resignation: How African American Girls Read Mainstream Teen Magazines" (Lisa Duke); "Hate Speech and the Third-Person Effect: Susceptibility, Severity, and the Willingness to Censor" (Jennifer L. Lambe and Dhavan V. Shah); "The Media, Susan Smith, and the Mythical Black Kidnapper: Why Don't I Trust My Black/White Neighbor?" (Jennifer L. Bailey Woodard); "KVUE-TV's 'Crime Guidelines' and Unconscious Racism: A Case Study" (Bob Pondillo); "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield: Race and Biraciality in 'Star Trek'" (Michele S. Foss); "Model Minority Discourse in the News Media: A Comparison of Asian American and Mormon Cases" (Chiung Hwang Chen); "'Beyond the Looking Glass': Thoughts and Feelings of African American Images in Advertisements by Caucasian Consumers" (Cynthia M. Frisby); "The Press and Lynchings of African Americans" (Richard M. Perloff); "Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian-American Adolescents' Responses to Culturally Embedded Ads" (Osei Appiah); "A Minority Voice in the Wilderness: Julius F. Taylor and the 'Broad Ax' of Salt Lake City" (Michael S. Sweeney); and "'The Indianapolis Recorder': A Midwestern Black Newspaper Passes Century Mark by Finding Formula for Survival" (Tendayi S. Kumbula). (RS)

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An Analysis of Role Portrayal in U.S. Spanish-Language Television Promotional Announcements

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Abstract

This study, the first to profile television promotional announcements on Spanish-language television, revealed an emphasis on sexual content and contact, suggestive dress and a high degree of sex role stereotyping. The images a viewer of Spanish language television receives via promotional announcements is that programming will feature an abundance of scantily clad, young, attractive women. The findings call into question whether the station promotional announcements, as well as programming they represent, are in keeping with the Hispanic cultural values as expressed in the marketing and communication literature.

An Analysis of Role Portrayal in U.S. Spanish-Language Television Promotional Announcements

Introduction

The Hispanic market

According to the U.S. census data the Hispanic population is about 30 million, comprising 11percent of the nation's total, and is projected to reach 42.4 million by 2010 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1999). The Hispanic-American population is growing five times faster than the U.S. population, making the U.S. the fifth largest Hispanic nation in the world (Bowser, 1998). Estimated at more than $350 billion per year, (Bowser, 1998) the Hispanic market has become an attractive segment to U.S. marketers, and many have turned to Spanish-language media outlets, especially Spanish-language television, to reach this rapidly growing consumer group.

As a result Spanish-language television has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. While overall television viewing increased only one percent in 1994, Hispanic viewing grew seven percent (Coe, 1995). Spanish-language television currently reaches 1.4 million households during primetime. Recently in some markets, including Miami and New York, the Spanish-language station has achieved higher ratings during prime-time than ABC, CBS, NBC or any other English-language station (Arocha, 1998).

Acculturation Theory

In addition to providing marketers and advertisers a way to reach the lucrative Hispanic market, Spanish-language television plays a critical role in the assimilation and integration of Hispanics into U.S. society (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). When immigrants come to the United States they bring with them the language, customs, values and traditions of their home country. Little by little they begin to blend native traditional values with dominant U.S. cultural values. This process is known as acculturation. As Hispanics mix into U.S. society they are exposed to many agents of acculturation, which help them learn about U.S. culture. Spanish-language television assists in the acculturation process by bringing American culture to the Hispanic population "who might otherwise be linguistically and culturally isolated from American society" (Valdes & Seoane, pg. 257).

Spanish-language television is a vital information link for U.S. Hispanics (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). It not only offers entertainment, cultural events, politics and news about mainstream America, but also provides information about other Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Some have suggested that many third- and fourth-generation U.S. Hispanics are engaged in retroacculturation (Valdes & Seoane, 1995), a conscious search for their ethnic identity. Many of these individuals may be highly assimilated into the U.S. culture but are seeking information and wish to embrace the heritage of their parents and grandparents. U.S. Spanish –language television, with its extended news coverage of Latin America and abundance of Mexican and Venezuelan-produced entertainment programs, may serve not only to acculturate newly arrived Hispanic immigrants , but also to retroacculturate third and fourth generation Hispanics (Valdes & Seoane, 1995).

Purpose of Study

Tan (1981) suggested that in order to study media as an agent of acculturation one must first define the media content. This study systematically profiles the content and examines the gender portrayals found in Spanish-language promotional announcements.

Background

Hispanic Culture

The word Hispanic derives from Hispania Iberian peninsula (Spain). The term Hispanic is commonly used to refer to residents of the United States who trace their family background to Spain or one of the Spanish-speaking Latin American nations (Marin & Marin, 1991; Foster, 1995). There are several other terms used to describe this population, including Latino, Chicano and Mexican-American, but Hispanic has become the one most used by social scientists because it is neither offensive nor politically linked (Marin & Marin, 1991). Hispanic is not a racial label, but an ethnic group. Most Hispanics are a racial mix of white Europeans, Indigenous Indian and African. As a group they share similar cultural values, customs and language. Most Hispanics speak Spanish and are Roman Catholic as a result of the Spanish-colonial heritage (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). Hispanics live throughout the United States but are concentrated primarily in metropolitan areas in the south and west. The states with the highest Hispanic population are New York, Texas, California and Florida (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). Hispanics come from many Latin American countries, and some Hispanics trace their ancestors to areas that are now New Mexico and Texas. According to the U.S. Census (1990) the largest sub-group of Hispanics is from Mexico (61.2 percent), 12 percent originate from Puerto Rico and 10 percent from countries in Central and South America. About 5 percent of Hispanics are from Cuba.

Demographically Hispanics are younger, have larger households and tend to stay married longer than non-Hispanic whites (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). Culturally the differences between Hispanics and mainstream American are great. As a group, Hispanics value family (familismo), the dependence and obedience of children, and the role of men as dominant to women (machismo). Hispanic culture tends to be group-oriented versus individually oriented. In relationships Hispanics stress respect, cooperation and formality and find Anglo relationships to be oddly informal and competitive (Valdes & Seoane, 1995). Hispanic culture emphasizes such values as fatalism, dignity, respect and spirituality (Foster, 1995; Gomez & Fassinger, 1994). Hispanics are lively people who enjoy music and dancing. They value ceremony, especially those centered on the family and the church, such as weddings, anniversaries and baptisms (Valdes & Seoane, 1995).

Spanish–language television and Hispanic television usage

Spanish-language television is very popular among most Hispanics. They tend to watch more television than the average American and prefer to do so in their native language (Yorgey, 1998). Hispanics watch general market television as well, however studies show that those Hispanics who are Spanish-dominant and Spanish-preferred -- the largest Hispanic market segments -- tend to prefer Spanish-language television and spend 76 percent of their viewing time on all-Spanish stations (Valdes & Seoane, 1995).

There are three Spanish-language television stations in the U.S, the largest of which is Univision. Its second-place rival is Telemundo followed by Galavision, which is Univision-owned. According to Nielsen Media Research, Univision is by far the dominant Spanish-language network, controlling 77 percent of Hispanic viewing versus 23 percent by Telemundo (Avila, 1997). Univision claims to penetrate 90 percent of Hispanic households throughout the country.

Univision, which began as the Spanish International Network (SIN), was founded in 1961 by a group of American entrepreneurs who saw a need for a Spanish only broadcast in the U.S. It was sold to Hallmark Cards, Inc. in 1986, but after millions of dollars in losses, was returned to its original investors in 1992 (Avila, 1997). Since then it has emerged as a media giant with 20 network-owned stations, 27 affiliated stations and 835 cable franchise agreements (www.unvision.net).

The programming on Univision is all in Spanish. It consists of popular telenovelas which are soap opera-like dramas, talk shows such as the popular "Cristina", music and entertainment oriented variety shows, such as Sabado Gigante (Giant Saturday), and news programs such as Primer Impacto (First Impact) (Bowser, 1998, www.univision.net). Most programming on Univision is supplied by companies outside the U.S. such as Venezuela's Venevision and Mexico's Grupo Televisa, the largest producer of Spanish-language programming (Bowser, 1998). In addition to Univision programs, the average viewer also sees 12 to 15 minutes of non-programming per hour during prime-time, half of which is commercials and half of which is station promotional announcements.

Previous Research

Hispanic Media

Spanish-language television, while discussed frequently in the trade press, has not been a popular subject for scholarly research. A review of the literature reveals few studies about Hispanic media. Most of the information about Spanish-language media and media usage comes from marketing research studies conducted by trade organizations such as Nielsen Market Research, Arbitron, Hispanic Market Connection and the Traffic Audit Bureau for Media Measurement, among others. Many trade publications (*Media Week, Advertising Age, Hispanic Business, Broadcasting & Cable)* report regularly on Hispanic media, but few scholars have devoted time to this rapidly growing channel.

The Hispanic consumer and advertising targeted to Hispanic consumers have been the subject of several studies (for example, Herbig & Yelkur, 1998, Green, 1997, Maso-Fleischman, 1997; Herbig & Yelkur, 1997; Roslow & Nicholls, 1996; Goodson & Shaver, 1994; Koslow, Shamdasani, Touchstone, 1994; Webster, 1992; Albonetti & Dominguez, 1989). Additionally, several studies deal with portrayals of Hispanics in general market media (see Taylor & Bang, 1997; Taylor, Lee & Stern, 1995, Faber, O'Guinn & Meyer, 1987) including Greenberg's *Mexican Americans & the Mass Media (1986*) and a more recently *Cubans and the Mass Media in South Florida* by Gonzalo R. Soruco (1996). A 1997 study by the National Association of Hispanic Journalist found that while Hispanics comprise more than 10 percent of the U.S. population they appeared on fewer than 1percent of the news stories which aired that year on ABC, NBC or CBS (Fitzgerald, 1998).

In a content analysis of Spanish-language television commercials, Armstrong and Kendrick (1999) found the presence of sex stereotypes and traditional gender roles. Women were more likely to be portrayed as homemakers, caring for children and doing household chores while men where more likely to be portrayed as professionals, working outside the home.

Promotional Announcement Research

Broadcasters use promotion, both on-air and advertising in other media, to attract audiences to their stations, increase ratings and build share (Eastman & Klein, 1991). Promotions are an important part of the broadcast industry and covered regularly in the trade press, but seldom the topic for scholarly research. Gantz and Eastman established (1983) that television viewers rely predominantly on print advertisements and to a lesser extent on promotional announcements to guide program selection. Eastman and Otteson (1994) studied the impact of promotional announcements aired during the Olympics and found little increase on program ratings. Another study, dealing with promotional announcement relationship to ratings, found that they seem to work better for returning shows and are more effective in the first month of a new season (Walker, 1993).

Researchers have studied the content, specifically sex, violence and gender portrayal, of television programming since the 1950s, but few have examined the images and portrayals in television promotions. Soley and Reid (1985) analyzed the content of television program advertisements appearing in *TV Guide* to determine the level of sex and violence present in the ads. They found that sex and violence were predominant features in television program advertising, especially ads for network programs. A more recent study examined the portrayal of women in television promotional announcements on the major networks during prime-time (Eaton, 1997) and found that women were underrepresented, stereotypically portrayed and featured as more provocatively dressed, more attractive, more physically fit and more blonde than male characters. Eaton's overall findings suggested that television networks produce promotional announcements that appeal to the target audience for that particular program. Networks such as FOX and

UPN which target a younger, male audience tend to portray women in more stereotypical ways than do the three older networks.

On-air announcements and other program advertisements are generally considered a reflection of the television programs they promote. Walker (1993) suggested that the negative impact of sexual, aggressive, stereotypical or anti-social behavior may be greater for promotions than for programming, though Eaton (1997) concluded that promotional announcements are not likely to contain more exciting (and stereotypical) content than the programs. Soley and Reid (1985) contend that television program advertisements with violence and sex are used to "bait" viewers to watch television programs but suggest that television program advertisements are "artifacts of programming decision, and, as a result, reflect the content of the programs which they promote"(pg. 111).

Research Questions

Four research questions are addressed in this study:

1) What types of programs are promoted by Spanish-language promotional announcements in prime time?
2) What type of character mix, specifically age and gender, is featured within the promotional announcements?
3) What is the extent of sex-role portrayals and primary role portrayals of adults featured in promotional announcements?
4) To what degree is sexual content present in the promotional announcements?

Method

Content analysis was applied to on-air promotional announcements from the Univision network. Univision was selected because, according to Nielsen Media Research, it garners the highest ratings in prime time as compared to the other Spanish-language television stations.

Sample

The sample consisted of 21 hours (seven evenings, selected randomly) of prime-time (7:00pm central time to 10:00pm CST) programming which aired on a cable affiliate in the Oklahoma City DMA from November 1 through November 11, 1998. Video tape recordings were edited to include only station promotional announcements. Promotional announcements were defined as non-program content which did not constitute paid advertisements or public service announcements. A total of 464 promotional announcements were coded, representing 167 non-duplicated items. A decision was made not to eliminate duplicated announcements in order to gauge the full impact of exposure to the hours of programming under study.

Coding

Each announcement was coded using an instrument designed to measure variables related both to the type of program being promoted as well as the roles of adults featured in the promotional announcements. Coding schemes were borrowed from the advertising content analysis literature including Craig (1992) for "characters present," from Bretl & Cantor (1988) for "setting," and "primary narrator," from Goffman (1976) for "male/female relationship roles," from Soley & Kurzbard (1986) for "sexual content," "sexual contact," and "degree of dress," from McArthur & Resko (1975) for "primary role" and from Gagnard (1993) for "attractiveness, successfulness and happiness index." Sixteen items involved the promotional announcement -as-a-whole (such as whether the primary narrator was male or female), followed by 21 pieces of data for up to two primary male adult characters and two primary female adult characters in each promotional announcement. Using the guideline set by Schneider & Schneider (1979), a primary character was defined as one who was on-camera for a minimum of three seconds or had at least one line of dialogue. It was decided that in instances where there was more than one "leading character," up to two were included for each sex. It should be noted that this coding procedure did little to omit any characters who would be considered "primary" beyond the four allowed.

Promotional announcements were first translated by a male Hispanic advertising executive who was bilingual in Spanish and English. They were then evaluated by two coders, the Hispanic advertising executive and an English-speaking female advertising professor. Each commercial was played a minimum of three times, after which the coders made independent evaluations using paper-and-pencil questionnaires. After independent evaluation of each commercial, data of the two coders were compared, disagreements were recorded and subsequently resolved by discussion, and a single set of data emerged for analysis.

The 464 promos yielded a total of 360 codable primary characters, which resulted in a total of 7264 judgments. From that total, 161 disagreements were recorded and resolved. Using the Holsti (1969) method for determining inter-coder reliability, an overall reliability coefficient of .978 was computed.

Findings

Profile of Station Promos

Sixty percent of the promotional announcements were 15 seconds in length, followed by 35 percent at 30 seconds, 3.2 percent at 7 seconds, 2.5 percent at one minute, and 0.2 percent at 10 seconds. More than half of the promotional announcements were promoting either telenovelas, variety shows or talk shows (see Table 1). Other types of programs coded were movies, game shows, real video, comedy, magazine and sports.

Character Profile

Two-thirds of the promotional announcements featured a mix of adult characters (see Table 2), followed by those with a mix of children and adults (23.8 percent). Only four promotional announcements featured children exclusively. Male voices narrated 97 percent of all promotional spots, and the remaining three percent contained both male and female voices. None of the promotional announcements was narrated exclusively with a female voice.

Slightly more women (55.3%, n=199) than men (44.7%, n=161) appeared as primary characters in the promotional spots. Two-thirds of adults featured were between the ages of 31 and 50 (see Table 3), and only 5 percent were older than 50. Women appearing in promotional announcements were younger than men, with 41 percent of women aged 30 or younger compared with 12.6 percent of men (x^2=44.4, df=4, p≤.05).

Role Portrayals

The most common adult role portrayed was that of program host (see Table 4), followed by professional and lover/spouse. Males were almost three times more likely to appear in a professional role than were females (x^2=30.5, df=1, p≤.05), who were more likely to appear as program hosts or lovers. Sex-role portrayals were coded for one-third of the station promotional announcements (See Table 5). Most portrayals were of Goffman's traditional type (25.1 percent), with 6 percent featuring men and women in equal roles, and another 3 percent depicting reverse roles.

Sexual Content and Contact

Forty percent of the station promotional announcements contained at least a mild form of sexual content (See Table 6) defined by Soley & Kurzbard (1986) as "advertisements containing verbal sexual references, those depicting male/female contact and portraying suggestively clad, partially clad and nude models" (pg. 48). Coders were instructed to record the highest level of sexual contact shown. Of the thirty percent whose sexual content was in the form of sexual contact, most involved contact beyond eye contact or hand holding (11 percent combined) and extended to intimate dancing, hugging, reclining or other touching. Examples of sexual content that did not include sexual contact were close-up camera shots of puckered lips, bare stomachs and dramatic cleavage, women seductively glancing into the camera and women erotically dancing alone. Examples of sexual contact typically occurred between men and women and included undressed men and women in bed, men and women engaged in open-mouth kissing, erotic dancing, or passionate embraces.

Presence of bare stomachs, exposed cleavage, and erotic dancing were also coded. Twenty-five percent of the promotional announcements contained one or more of these sexual images. One example of presence of exposed cleavage was a promotional announcement for an episode of "Cristina" whose topic was "women with enormous breasts." The clip for this episode showed a tall blonde woman with extremely large breasts wearing a low-cut tight blouse. She was pulling a shorter man into her chest and burying his head in her exposed cleavage.

Degree of Dress

Degree of dress was coded according to Soley and Kurzbard's guidelines (1986). Those dressed normally were coded as fully dressed, those with open blouses exposing cleavage or chest areas or those with extremely tight clothing or lingerie were considered suggestively clad and those in bathing suits or with exposed breasts or midriffs were coded as partially clad. While adults in three-fourths of promotional announcements were normally dressed (see Table 7), another 16 percent were suggestively dressed and another 10 percent were only partially clad. Forty percent of women were either suggestively clad or partially clad, compared with only 7.5 percent of men ($t=50.7$, $df=2, p<.05$). An example of partially clad models was found in a promotional announcement for a "candid camera" type program which featured close-ups of the back of young women in thong bikinis and a clip of a woman with her skirt blown over her head with the camera at such an angle so the audience could only see her undergarments.

Discussion

This study, the first of its kind, captures the images seen by millions of Hispanic consumers on prime time Spanish-language television. If promotional announcements are a reflection of programming, as indicated in the communication and marketing literature, then the data herein suggests that Spanish-language television viewers often see a parade of scantily dressed, young, attractive women exposing partially bare breasts, bare stomachs and bare bottoms to the audience.

According to the findings of this study, the content of promotional announcements does not reflect the Hispanic culture as described in the literature. The Hispanic culture is traditional, conservative and family oriented; however, our findings indicated almost no adults were portrayed in the role of parents. The amount and type of sexual content and suggestive dress was more than conservative. Over half of the Hispanic women in the U.S. population work outside the home, but only ten percent were portrayed as professionals in the promotional announcements.

In Spanish-language TV promotions, women are seen but not heard. Women were on-screen as primary characters more often than men, but they were almost never heard as voice-over narrators. Women are featured most often as show hosts on Spanish-language television. One talk show, called "El Gordo y La Flaca" or "The fat man and the skinny woman", features two hosts, an older, over-weight, unattractive man and a young, beautiful, thin, blonde woman. The only two talk shows promoted are hosted by women, "Cristina" and "Maite" and the game shows and variety shows typically feature an older male host with a younger female co-host.

There are limitations to the present study. It is a point-in-time study capturing two weeks of fall programming in one market. Suggestions for future research should include additional analysis of promotional announcements at different times of the year, across different dayparts and across other Hispanic media. In addition it would be instructive to compare these findings to general market content analyses so see if differences exist. Also a comparison to other non-programming material such as commercials and PSA' s could offer a composite view of the content of Spanish-language television commercial breaks.

The literature indicates that television content is constructed by broadcasters to appeal to the target audience for which it is aimed. For example, Eaton (1997) suggested that Fox and UPN target young males and therefore contain more sex-stereotyped, young, attractive women in their promotional announcements. Spanish-language television also contains an abundance of sex-stereotyped, young, attractive women, but studies indicate that more women watch Spanish-language television than men. This might suggest that the content of the promotional announcements is inappropriate and possibly distasteful to the female viewer. Further research could analyze the evaluation of these sex stereotyped images by Hispanic women and men.

Table 1

Types of Programs Featured in Spanish-Language Promotional Announcements

	%	(n)
Novellas	18.8	87
Variety	18.8	87
Talk	16.6	77
Movies	9.7	45
Game Show	9.1	42
Real Video	8.4	39
Comedy	7.8	36
Magazine	6.3	29
Sports	4.7	22

Table 2

Character Mix in Spanish-Language Promotional Announcements

	%	(n)
All adult/mixed sex	65.2	304
Mix of ages and sex	23.8	111
All male adult	4.9	23
All female adult	4.9	23
All children	0.9	4
No characters present	0.2	1

Table 3

Age of Adult Characters in Spanish-Language Station Promos*

	Total		Male		Female	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
under 20	7.4	26	3.8	6	10.5	20
21-30	20.6	72	8.8	14	30.5	58
31-40	38.7	135	54.1	86	25.8	49
41-50	27.8	97	26.4	42	28.9	55
over 50	5.4	19	6.9	11	4.2	8

*$x2 = 44.4$, df = 4, $p \leq .05$

Table 4

Primary Roles of Adults Appearing in Spanish-Language Promotional Announcements*

	Total		Male		Female	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Professional	17.8	64	27.3	44	10.1	20
Lover/spouse	13.9	50	10.6	17	16.6	33
Parent	3.9	14	6.2	10	2.0	4
Host	33.1	119	23.0	37	41.2	82
Other	31.4	113	32.9	53	30.2	60

$x2 = 30$, df = 1, $p \leq .05$

Table 5

Goffman Sex-Role Portrayals in Spanish-Language Station Promos

	%	(n)
No sex-role portrayals	66.1	308
Traditional	25.1	117
Equality	5.6	26
Reverse	3.2	15

Table 6

Sexual Content and Sexual Contact in Spanish-Language Promotional Announcements

	%	(n)
Content		
Visual sex images	30.0	140
Verbal & visual	9.6	45
No sex images/references	60.4	282
Contact		
Eye contact	5.6	26
Holding hands	5.4	25
Other contact	19.1	89
No contact	70.0	327
Type of sexual image		
None	74.8	348
Bare stomachs	14.4	67
Exposed cleavage	11.4	53
Erotic dancing	7.1	33
All of above		1.7 (8)

Table 7

Degree of Dress in Spanish-Language Promotional Announcements*

	Total		Male		Female	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Degree of dress						
Fully dressed	74.4	268	92.5	149	59.8	119
Suggestively clad	15.6	56	5.6	9	23.6	47
Partially clad	10.0	36	1.8	3	16.6	33

* *x*2 = 50.7, df = 2, p ≤.05

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A Critical Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Native Americans by *The Daily Oklahoman* newspaper for 1998

A study focusing on Indians stereotypes,

types and kinds of stories about Native Americans

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A Critical Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Native Americans by *The Oklahoman* newspaper for 1998

ABSTRACT

This study reviewed 368 articles about Native Americans in *The Oklahoman* for 1998 to determine the presence of stereotypes, if any, and the kinds and types of articles written about American Indians.

The results showed that 30.9 percent of the coverage or 114 articles were about American Indians engaged in traditional artistic pursuits or non-Indians' representation of historical Indians. The Indian of the Past was the most common image of the Native American presented to the readers of *The Oklahoman* in 1998.

There were no investigative or interpretative stories. There were only four editorials.

The language used in the stories was the same as for stories about other Oklahomans but the choice of stories was different.

A Critical Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of Native Americans by *The Oklahoman* newspaper for 1998

A study focusing on Indian stereotypes, types and kinds of stories about Native Americans

"It is little wonder that Indian peoples were perceived not as they were but as they 'had' to be---from a European point of view. They were whisked out of the realm of the real and into the land of the make-believe. Indians became variably super- or subhuman, never ordinary. They dealt in magic, not judgment. They were imagined to be stuck in the past, not guided by its precedents." Michael Dorris, Modoc, 1986[1]

I. Objectives

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how the media cover Native American communities. Such an investigation should contribute valuable information to practicing journalists and mass media researchers about the relationship of the media to an often overlooked minority group.

Native Americans number about 2 million, over half of whom live near or on Indian reservations.[2] "Oklahoma was the state with the largest American Indian population in 1990, climbing from second in 1980."[3] Oklahoma had 252,000 Indians in the 1990 census, followed by California with 242,000 and Arizona and New Mexico with 204,00 and 134,000 respectively. .

The three largest tribes in Oklahoma are the Cherokee, population 42,000; the Creek, 42,000, and the Choctaw, 20,000.[4]

The Oklahoman was chosen because it the largest newspaper in Oklahoma with a daily circulation of 213,288 and a Sunday edition of 301,149. As the largest newspaper in the state with the largest Indian population, *The Oklahoman* is in a position to be a trendsetter for coverage of Native Americans by other newspapers throughout the country.

Specific objectives of this study include:

1. Evaluation of the kinds and numbers of articles devoted to Native American communities in Oklahoma by *The Oklahoman*.

2. Analysis of the use of Indian stereotypes in these articles.

At the Unity '94 convention in Atlanta, where minority journalists of many different ethic and racial groups gathered, the coverage of minorities by the media was a prime topic.[5] Gary Fife, a reporter at Alaska's KSKA radio station, lamented the time warp in which the media has trapped Native Americans. "What we find is that America knows more about our past and our dead ancestors. We want our colleagues to find out: What we are really like. We are a diverse group of cultures."[6] Fife categorized the bulk of stories about Native Americans as "dance or dysfunction" articles, with the Indian portrayed as either a cultural relic or a welfare basketcase.[7]

II. Methodology

This study analyzed the 1998 coverage of Native Americans in *The Oklahoman*. These articles numbered 368 and were downloaded from The Oklahoman Archives and Lexus-Nexis Academic Universe. A full year's worth of articles was selected as the sample to mitigate the effects of any seasonal changes in coverage - such as stories about powwows in the summer - and of breaking news stories that might skew the coverage if a smaller time frame was used.

The subject categories into which the 368 articles were placed were partly dictated by traditional newspaper beats (state and local government, crime, business, courts, sports, education, religion, health, lifestyle) and partly by the particularities of the Indian situation (tribal government, Indian history, Indian culture). The lifestyle category was listed as "Indian families and individuals" rather than lifestyle as it was more descriptive of the articles. The 12 categories were business; crime; courts; Indian culture; education; health; Indian history; Indian families and individuals; religion; federal, state and city government and politics; sports and tribal government. Games stories were excluded from the sports category since even a school district like Little Axe, which is considered to have a heavy concentration of Indian students, is only 16 percent Indian.

Not all articles neatly fell into one category and decisions had to be made as to which category was the most important. I placed, for instance, the stories on the location of the Native American Cultural Center in the cultural category, although all but one of the stories concerned a political fight between Oklahoma City and Edmond over whose city's site would be selected. I reasoned that the purpose of the site - the preservation and transmission of Indian culture - fueled all the subsequent stories about it. Oklahoma City and Edmond wouldn't have been fighting over the center if Indian culture was not Oklahoma's biggest tourist draw. Similarly, I had to decide whether to place a story about an Indian wrestler's refusal to cut his hair in the cultural, sports or individual Indian category. I placed the story in the sports category, reasoning that his refusal to cut his hair was newsworthy because his sport forbade long hair.

Particular attention was paid to interpretative and investigative stories as these by their nature require more time and work to develop than a news or feature story. Their presence would indicate a commitment on the part of *The Oklahoman* to invest more reportorial resources into coverage of Native Americans. Interpretative reporting helps readers understand news event. These stories put events in perspective by showing "how and why it happened, what it means and what may occur as a result - causes and consequences."[8] Investigative reporting uncovers wrongdoing and is often done in a series of stories because of the complexity of the task.[9]

Editorials were also noted separately since they represent sufficient interest in a community for a newspaper to take a stand on an issue in that community.

Announcements were given as part of the totals and also separated out. Announcements were defined as stories that had only the barest amount of information necessary to know when a meeting was being held, for example, or who had received an award. Any story beyond this minimum was not distinguished from the other articles. Announcements are at the other end of the spectrum from investigative and interpretative articles. They are usually written from press releases and take very little time. Knowing which stories are full-fledged articles and which are announcements helps to further assess the commitment of *The Oklahoman* to Native American coverage.

News stories and feature stories were not separated from each other as they both typically represent a moderate amount of effort on the part of the reporter. Also the featurization of the news makes separating the two kinds of stories increasingly difficult, without yielding, in the case of this study, much information about the quality of Native American coverage.

The stories were also analyzed for the presence of Indian stereotypes. Most of the stereotypes are clustered around The Indian of the Past: the warrior, the mystic, the savage, the stoic. In the main, these stereotypes are positive. The negative stereotypes are clustered around modern Indians: the welfare leech, the incompetent, the drunk, the reservation idler. The classic Indian stereotypes, as revealed by a search of the literature, are:

The Warrior - this stereotype is particularly attached to the Sioux. Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, both Sioux, are two of the most famous historical Indians and were noted for their intransigence to whites and their warlike spirit, particularly Crazy Horse. The darkest variation of the warrior stereotype is the Indian as savage, who commits terrible depravities to the white community. "Basically, images of the Indian have embraced two contradictory conceptions: the good Indian (or noble savage) and bad Indian. The two images--the noble Red Man and the bloodthirsty devil--have persisted in literature and popular culture from captivity narratives of the seventeenth century to made-for-television movies of the late twentieth century."[10]The first American newspaper, *Public Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*, talks of Indians, "lurking" in the forest to kidnap unwary white children.[11] The little four-page paper praised good Indians who had adopted Christianity. From the initial contact between Europeans and Indians came a Western view of Indians that persists today. "Two broad stereotypes of the Indian emerged: the noble savage, a simple but natural creature, distinguished by a special innocence and harmony with nature, and the evil Indian, a degraded, barbaric figure most notable for a bloody hatred of civilization." [12]The Indian as savage was much more prevalent at the time of the Indian Wars than it is today. But the brave Indian so admired today may be an effort to overcompensate for other facets of modern Indian life that are viewed negatively.[13] Part of the warrior image portrays

Indians as impervious to pain - and humorless.[14] This is the "Wooden Indian" of cigar store fame, the Indian who says only "How" in greeting, the visionseeker hung by iron hooks in his flesh at the Sundance. The Indian "squaw" - rotund, pigtailed, silent - with a baby on her back, is also a stoic, a variation on the Indian warrior.

The Victim - There are variations on this stereotype. In the early twentieth century the idea of the "Vanishing Indian" was widely believed, including by those who most fervently espoused Indian causes and by the press.[15] Indians as incompetents, welfare loafers, and drunks are some of the less sympathetic variations of the Indian as victim.[16] The exhausted warrior astride his horse "at the end of the trail" is probably the most sympathetic victim stereotype.[17] Indians huddled on reservations because they can't make it in white society is another variation of this stereotype.[18]

The Mystic - The New Age manifestation of this stereotype is the Indian as environmentalist - shedding a tear for how Mother Earth has been degraded by white civilization. This exact stereotype was in an ad by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Iron Eyes Cody, dressed in traditional Indian garb, cried (albeit discreetly to fulfill the stoic stereotype) in television ads as he witnessed an America devastated by whites' misuse of the land. At the end of the ad he faded out of the scene (the Vanishing Indian). Although many whites see this as a positive stereotype it regulates Indians to a passive "tear in the eye" role as a spectator and puts them in the past in traditional, not modern dress. "The grossest stereotypes depicted Indians as beings without action or agency, who left no mark on the land, who lived within the strictest of natural constraints. These ideas unintentionally denied Native Americans their humanity, culture, history and most importantly, their modernity."[19]The Indian is seen as mysterious, other worldly, closer to nature and much further from science than the white man. The medicine man is a common representation of the mystic stereotype. The Indian maiden, bewitchingly slim and able to flit through the forests unharmed, and the Indian wise woman - Hiawatha's grandmother - are minor mystics. Although these are typically positive stereotypes that engender goodwill toward Indians, none of them depict Indians in a modern setting. "Stereotypic images persist to the detriment of Native Americans because the images relegate them to a 'past' and misdirect non-Indian society's responses to modern native people and issues."[20]

The Invisible Modern Indian

This is not a stereotype, but a result of Indian stereotypes. Indian stereotypes take up newspaper space that might go to modern Indians who are not warriors, mystics, or welfare cases. These are Indians who fight their wars on reservation basketball courts, go to Catholic or Protestant churches while undergoing the rigors of a Sun Dance once or twice in a lifetime, regret the past but don't live in it, and work as teachers, engineers, janitors and computer processors. "I think that Indians are trying to prove to society that we are a 21st-century people, when we are always idealized as a 19th century people. We're trying to be productive citizens and still have our rights and our dignity,"[21] said Alvin Deer, director of the Native American International Caucus for the United Methodist Church.

III. Significance

Most journalists today, like most Americans, are full of goodwill for Indians. The reality of what happens to American Indians in modern journalism, however, lies in the specific stories about them, not the writer's good intentions. Journalists, as people of the fact, respect specifics. This present study focuses on 368 stories produced by *The Oklahoman* in 1998 on American Indians. This is not a small sample but an in-depth look at one year's work. The reporters who wrote these stories and the editors who edited them may well challenge this study's findings. But they will have to do so with specifics of their own from these same stories. Such a dialogue is itself an agent for change for who in defending oneself has not found weaknesses?

A search of the academic literature turned up no study that duplicates the one this author undertook although they resulted in significant findings. A 1994 study researched Native American stereotypes held by college students in two universities in the Northwest, the stereotypes having been derived from both personal contact and TV portrayals. [22] A 1995 article in American Indian Quarterly exhaustively explored the portrayals of Native Americans in the media as environmentalists.[23] A 1991 Canadian study included the treatment of all minorities in Canada, including Native Americans, by major Canadian media.[24]

In the book *Native Americans in the News* stereotypes are discussed and media coverage of Native Americans is analyzed from the 1920s to the 1990s using central ideas for each decade or group of decades. Twenty-three newspapers, including articles from *The Oklahoman*, were studied and 42 magazines. The book twice refers to *The Oklahoman*, both times favorably. *The*

Oklahoman's coverage in 1934 of the Creeks' first election since 1899 was compared to coverage in *Newsweek*. Author Mary Ann Weston praised *The Oklahoman* for its matter-of-fact story. "The images of the Creeks in the two stories contrasted starkly. In *The Oklahoman* they were responsible citizens exercising their tribal franchise after being denied it for a generation. In Newsweek they were recently-primitive and picturesque. Their exercise in democracy was made to seem laughable."[25]

Again in 1934, *The Oklahoman* covered a meeting between the Osages and Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier. *The Oklahoman* portrayed the Osages as "thoughtful and involved in determining their own fates," Weston concluded.[26]

In another book, *U.S. News Coverage of Racial Minorities, A Sourcebook, 1934-1996*, there is no specific mention of *The Oklahoman*. The book separately analyzes the news coverage of five minorities: Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Weston and John M. Coward were the authors for the Native American section. They trace Native American stereotypes back to the Europeans' initial contact with American Indians. They chronicle the coverage of important Indian events in both regional and national publications. The book extensively cites scholars and historians on their assessment of the media's treatment of Indians. It concludes that the real lives of Indians are known by few people outside their communities. Coverage is triggered by violence, conflict or crisis and is reported without historical causes and underlying issues.[27]

Indians are in the position of having to fight invisibility on the one hand and, on the other, stereotypes that are sometimes positive. Seemingly positive stereotypes may be harder to combat because people, including journalists, do not see the harm in them. The flip side, however, of doing homage to the 19th century Indian is neglecting the 20th century Indian, who not being stuck in an idealized past, comes off second best. But because the 20th century Indian is largely invisible the comparison is not obvious and that, too, adds to the Indian's dilemma. People do not "get it." Everybody likes Indians so what's the problem? The answer to that lies in those 368 stories.

IV. A description and numerical accounting of the articles

Coverage of Indian culture in *The Oklahoma* overshadowed all over coverage of Native Americans, accounting for 114 articles or 30.9 percent of the 368 articles. The second largest category was tribal government with 62 stories, accounting for 16.8 percent of the total number of stories. Although there was a smaller number of tribal government stories than cultural stories, seven of them made the front page. Also when announcements are separated out from other stories, the tribal government category has 55 articles left or 23 percent of the total and the Indian culture category has 56 articles or 24.2 percent of the total. The cultural category had the highest percentage, 51 percent, of announcements of any of the categories. Announcements accounted for only 11 percent of the tribal government stories.

The Oklahoman initiated no investigative reporting in 1998 that uncovered wrongdoing by the tribes or wrongdoing done to them. One of the 368 articles was a story about an investigation by three federal agencies of possible illegal activities of the founders of a bank on Indian land.

The investigation was not, however, conducted by *The Oklahoman* although it broke the story.

There were no interpretative stories that analyzed the present situation of Indians in Oklahoma, although a few articles included some references to causes and consequences, most notably a sports story on the use of Indian names for athletic teams.

There were four editorials, including one in which Indians were only a sidelight.

After culture and tribal government, the number of stories in the different categories were: Indian history, 33; politics and government, 32; education, 28; Indian individuals and families, 22; business, 24; health, 20; courts, 12; sports, 14; crime, 9; and religion, 4.

Religion was the smallest category with three announcements and one feature story. Many of the cultural stories, however, contained religious elements, although there was little detail offered.

There were also only four family stories which was also surprising, given the importance of family to Indians, and indeed to any group. All three feature stories on families were about people searching for their children or siblings, who had been adopted out. There were no stories about intact Indian families. A fourth story was about a child abuse drive. There were 12 stories about individual Indians in the individuals and family category, including a page 1 story about Wilma Mankiller, former principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor.

In the cultural category I placed all stories about Indian arts and crafts, museums displaying Indian artifacts, cultural awareness activities, and cultural centers.

Most of the cultural coverage was about traditional Indian arts and crafts from the past or modern work patterned on them - masks, beadwork, pottery, baskets, dancing, storytelling and dolls.

There were few articles about Indians using modern technology in making their art. Only five articles were about Indian film and video - all of them announcements. There was one article about an Indian artist who exhibits his photographs, among other artwork.

Coverage of tribal government was dominated by stories of power struggles in the Cherokee, Comanche, Kiowa, and Sac & Fox tribes.

The tribal government most covered in 1998 was the Cherokee, with 12 stories, of which nine concerned Chief Joe Byrd, whom the newspaper condemned in an editorial. The Cherokees are Oklahoma's largest tribe and the second largest tribe in the nation after the Navajos. One story focused on Byrd's continuing dispute with the tribe's highest court. One recounted his firing of an accountant one day after the latter reported that the tribe was $6.4 million in arrears. One contained the accusations of two Cherokee activists who said Bryd was illegally wiretapping their phones. Four reported on a federal audit which found numerous apparent violations of federal and tribal law by tribal executives. Another recounted the efforts of Byrd's supporters to find out who leaked the results of a federal audit. Another story was about the trial of the deposed head of the Cherokee Housing Authority and a federal grand jury investigation of an alleged illegal wire tap operation by the principal chief. One was an editorial on Chief Bryd's "tyranny." The only stories which did not present a negative view of Cherokee government were an article on a date for a constitution hearing and a story about housing loans. Three of the stories about possible mishandling of tribal government money ran on page 1 - two stories about the federal audit and the one story about the accountant being fired. Only two other tribes received page 1 treatment, the Comanches and the Cheyenne Arapahos.

The Comanche government had four stories about a tug-of-war between two Comanche leaders, both of whom claim to be the chairman of the tribe. One of these stories ran on page one of the newspaper.

The Cheyenne Arapaho had five stories in all. Two of the stories were about its refusal to let the state have 50 acres to widen a state highway. One story was an editorial about President Clinton's "lust" for campaign funds, and cited the Cheyenne Arapahos' contribution to his 1996 campaign. A page one story described the contents of a draft report by GOP senators about the Democratic National Committee's treatment of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe of Oklahoma. The report called the treatment "among the most sordid" stories from the party's 1996 fund-raising efforts.

The Osage tribal government had two stories on its passage of a right-to-work law and an editorial lauding the tribe for this action. The Osage had a fourth story on a pilot study in which it is involved, administering its own state welfare cash assistance program. A fifth story was about the mineral rights that have brought the tribe wealth.

The Choctaws, Oklahoma's second biggest tribe, had four stories in the tribal government category although there were other stories in the health and education categories. One of the stories in the tribal government category was a newspaper editorial criticizing the tribal council's decision to continue to allow the chief special access to the list of voters in tribal elections, rather than letting it circulate freely among rival candidates. There was also a news article about the council's decision on the voters' list. Another story announced a $5 million contract with the federal government. The fifth story was about the half million dollars of Choctaw Nation funds used to defend former Chief Hollis Roberts from federal sexual assault charges.

The Kiowas had three stories; two of them were about recalling three of their tribal officers. A third story reported on the results of a vote that defeated a motion to reduce the requirement that a person be at least one quarter Kiowa to participate in Kiowa elections. The Sac & Fox had two stories, both about a political struggle on whether to reinstate two leaders that the governing council had ousted.

The Seminole Nation had one story. The council turned down the chief's plan to lend its name to an entertainment venture in Florida, some council members citing misgivings about the chief's past handling of financial matters.

The Peoria tribe had two small announcements - one about a tribal election, the other announcing the winners of the election. The Caddos also had a small story on tribal candidates.

The Citizen Ban Potawatomi Tribe had two stories in this category besides stories in the business category, including its award for Native American Business of the Year. The Muskogee Nation had one story.

The politics and government category had 32 stories with no major story predominating.

Had the stories on the Native American Cultural Center been put in this category, they would have constituted the largest running story.

The history category included two editorials on the Point of View page, one by an Indian writer characterizing the Trail of Tears as America's version of ethnic cleansing. The other editorial chided Oklahomans for not being mindful enough of Indian travails.

The health coverage included stories on diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, kidney diseases, and AIDS.

Of the 14 sports articles, three of the 10 full-length articles were about using Indian names for athletic teams. Game stories were not included in the sports category.

Among the 28 education stories were articles about the Choctaws pledging $1 million to help 1,000 college students, the Choctaws breaking ground on a $450,000 library, and two stories about a nursing program at the University of Oklahoma designed to attract Indians to the health field.

In the business category there were three feature stories and 13 news stories out of 20 articles. The four remaining stories were brief announcements. The features were on a North Dakota recording studio for Indian music, the founder of a chain of pizza restaurants and the Indian owner of an American Indian cafe in Sante Fe . Two of the news articles were about a controversy over the Choctaws' decision to donate land along an interstate highway to Eastern Oklahoma College as a travel plaza.

There were nine crime stories, none of which were announcements. Five of these nine stories concerned a scheme by a bank that promised depositors that its location on Indian land provided them with "Swiss bank secrecy."

In the courts' category, *The Oklahoman* gave front page treatment to four of the seven articles. The remaining five stories were announcements. Continuing troubles with the Cherokee Nation were featured on page 1 in a news story about two district judges and court clerks who face possible jail time for operating their courts outside tribal courthouse. Also on page 1 was an article about tobacco companies successfully petitioning the Creek Nation Supreme Court to decide whether the tribe can sue them for health care costs related to smoking. In other front page stories a federal appeals court decided a 131-year-old land dispute between two tribes and the U.S. Supreme Court strengthened tribal immunity in civil lawsuits.

V. What the articles say

The Indian of the Past is definitely the Native American that received the most number of stories from *The Oklahoman*. Cultural coverage dominated all others and it was heavily weighed toward traditional Indian art forms that glorified days gone by. Typical of the cultural coverage was a Paiute tale about how the North Star came to be in the sky,[28] a reception for a Kiowa-Apache Indian who specializes in Indian maidens, warriors and traditional dancers [23]; a guest speaker sharing her family history of the Battle of Sand Creek,[24] and Indians retelling ancient stories about animals.[25] Perhaps best representative of this coverage was the Indian in an acrylic painting described by *Oklahoman* reporter John Brandenburg: "Ghostly white paint dramatizes a warrior holding a dotted shield with a bird's head attached to it and posing in front of a bright red speckled background in (Matthew) Bearden's 'I Once Stood in the Sun.'"[26]

The effect of concentrating on a sad and glorious past was well articulated by Sarah Boehme, museum curator, in a Jan. 16 story in *The Oklahoman*.[27] "Consider the powerful influence of an image such as 'End of the Trail,' on young people who receive the message that their cultures are dead or dying," Boehme said.

One story about Indian culture starts off by saying: "The World of an American-Indian child will be explored in an exhibit - cradle boards, baby bonnets, dolls, tepees and umbilical pouches."[28] The story does not qualify this statement by stating what century is being referred to. Whereas other newspaper stories assume a modern time frame, and find it unnecessary to state that fact, a story about Indians just as naturally has a 19th century frame and finds it unnecessary to state that.

Indians using such modern techniques as film and video to express themselves artistically hardly figured into the newspaper's coverage. A speaker at The University of Oklahoma on Native American films was announced.[29] Advance publicity was given to the 1998 Red Earth American Indian Film and Video Competition, although the competition itself was not covered.[30]

An exception to these stories was a feature about a North Dakota music company that has a high-tech recording studio and a sophisticated marketing plan for Indian musicians.[31] This feature, however, was an Associated Press story and thus did not originate with *The Oklahoman*.

Elements of the modern world also were present in a short announcement about the appearance of Joy Harjo and the musical group, Poetic Justice, at Cameron University Theater. Voted the best Indian musician by a readers' poll in the *Oklahoma Indian Times*, Ms. Harjo mixes a musical blend of jazz, reggae and African and American Indian rhythms. She is a nationally known poet, her most recent book being "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky."[32] *The Oklahoman* had no follow up story covering the event itself.

Another announcement described a Choctaw-Cherokee artist who used computer prints as part of his mixed media. [33] A dancer with the Great Plains Dancers has modernized her dress (to the consternation of many in her audience) by using fabrics with neon colors, instead of the traditional earthy tones.[34]

But these stories with modern touches were just a tiny part of the overall cultural coverage which had 114 entries. The value of the modern Indian versus the 19th century Indian was succinctly put forward by an appraiser from Christie's auction house who came to Oklahoma to evaluate Indian and other Western items. He tactfully explained why he would not be taking back any modern Indian art, saying it would "probably sell better locally than at New York auction."[35]

If the cultural and history category are added together, they account for 39.9 percent of the total.

The Generic Indian

Although Oklahoma has 55 federally recognized tribes, there was little attempt in the pages of *The Oklahoman* to differentiate one tribe's culture from another. In an announcement for

The Great American Indian Dance Company, *The Oklahoman* noted that "each dance is preceded by a narration explaining the origin, tribe and significance."[36] But there is no indication of what any of these are, nor was there any coverage of the performance itself. There are some exceptions to the lumping together of Native American cultures. In a story about an Indian fashion designer, she is described as using Seminole patchwork, Sac & Fox ribbon work and Choctaw diamond designs. [37]A longer story on American Indians' use of plants gives good details on how different tribes all over the country used plants.[38] But the great majority of the articles on culture simply refer to Indian basketry, Indian beadwork, Indian storytelling, Indian dancing.

The Incompetent Indian

The coverage of tribal government was highlighted by power struggles in the Comanche, Cherokee and Sac & Fox tribes, possible malfeasance of funds in the Cherokee tribe, the recall of three tribal officers by the Kiowas, and passage of a right-to-work law by the Osages.

Both the troubles in the Comanches' and Cherokees' tribal governments were given prominent play.

In addition to articles on continuing trouble and countercharges in the Cherokee tribal government, *The Oklahoman* ran an editorial articulating its opinion of Chief Byrd. "The administration of Chief Joe Byrd of the Cherokee Nation is a case study in both malfeasance and misuse of government (federal and tribal) funds,"[39] the opening of the editorial stated. *The Oklahoman*, however, neither with the Cherokees or the other tribes, provided any interpretative reporting so that readers could understand why the tribes were in such turmoil. It is one thing to understand that Byrd is a tyrant, another to understand why he was elected. The lack of any interpretative reporting leaves the reader without a context in which to understand why three tribes are having power struggles. In the absence of context, readers who do not have the detailed knowledge of the reporter may well fall back on stereotypical ideas of Indians. Are the tribal governments of the Comanches, Sac & Fox and Cherokees in such turmoil because they're run by Indians? Are Indians incompetent to run their own affairs, financially undependable, and, at the darkest end of the spectrum, savages? Some of this fallout is mitigated by *The Oklahoman*'s praise in its editorial of the previous administrations of Wilma Mankiller and Ross Swimmer. Still the lack of interpretative reporting leaves a serious gap in *The Oklahoman*'s coverage of tribal government.

Nowhere was the stereotype of the incompetent Indian stronger than in a front page story Feb. 10 detailing a GOP report on the Democratic National Committee's treatment of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma.[40] The draft report for GOP senators says the tribes were "politically naive" and "fell into the hands of a series of Democratic operators who attempted to pick their pockets." "The fleecing only stopped when several unflattering press accounts ran regarding the tribes' plight."[41] The tribes are referred to as "poor and vulnerable." Oklahoma City attorney Mike Turpen, who raised money for the Democrats in 1996, is allowed, high up in the story, to respond to these charges. He attacks the report, defends the Democrats and puts in some good words for the Indians, calling them "bright, smart, intelligent people" whom the report is treating like "second class citizens" that shouldn't be participating in the political process. The position of the tribes on their donations is summed up from previous statements tribal leaders made and is printed, after Turben's comments and after more details about the report, making them come far later in the story. If an attempt was made to contact tribal officials for this article, as Turben was contacted, no mention is made of it in the story. The tribes are put in the position of having others defend them, rather than defending themselves, which subtly reenforces the stereotype the GOP report is attempting to convey.

In the crime category, the major story was the federal investigation of a bank scheme on tribal land. *The Oklahoman* broke the news in a story July 2, revealing that the bank was under scrutiny by three federal law enforcement agencies and described some of the bank's activities.[42] This article was the closest the newspaper came to an investigative story on Native American affairs. The bank, started by non-Indians, had allegedly offered "Swiss secrecy" to investors by virtue of being located on Indian land. The bank also reputedly had ties to a railroad bond fraud scheme. Although the article undoubtedly represented hard work by the reporter in ferreting out details about the investigation, the investigation itself was carried out by the federal government, not the newspaper. A follow up article had a colorful but questionable quote. In this article Jess Green, an attorney representing the Apache Development Authority, revealed that a tribal banking commissioner, Denton A. Harper, had signed a charter for the bank. Harper, however, did not have the authority to issue such a charter , Green said, and later resigned. Green's explanation for why Harper signed the charter contains this questionable quote: "Basically they (the bank's backers) just found a loose Indian and had him sign something."[43] While Mr. Harper may have been naive or incompetent, no proof was presented in the article, although the quote implies that he was. Also the quote broadly characterizes Indians, not just Mr. Harper. Left alone, they can be preyed upon, because of their lack of knowledge and sophistication. This quote resonates with the incompetent, naive Indian stereotype. It is difficult to imagine any newspaper running a similar quote about African-Americans. "They just found a loose Black around and had him sign something." The quote also implies a lower standard by which to judge Indian behavior because Indians don't know any better. This may get the Apaches off the hook in the present incident, which may well have been Mr. Green's intention as he was their attorney, but the probable long-term effects are sobering if neither Indians nor non-Indians expect Native American public officials to be responsible for their actions. *The Oklahoman* did not invent the quote but it printed it - without any proof on Mr. Green's part that it was true.

Invisible Suffering

The Oklahoman offered a wide variety of stories about Indians last year, as demonstrated by the 12 categories into which this study divided up the articles for 1998. But the happy Indian of the Summer powwows[44] and the Choctaw storyteller delighting children with her tribe's animal tales,[45] even the sentimental rendering of the Indian warrior pining for the sun, do not convey the darker history of the state.

The Point of View section of *The Oklahoman* offered two notable exceptions to the newspaper's diffidence in referring to how Indians have suffered in Oklahoma, not gloriously atop a magnificent horse, but as other Oklahomans suffer, in real, daily agonies. One of these articles was by Native American Gary Sandefur, writing for the Knight Ridder /Tribune service.[46] Sandefur was writing on the 160th anniversary of the beginning of the Trail of Tears which he calls "an American form of ethnic cleansing" that forced the Cherokee Nation from the eastern United States to Oklahoma, along with other Indian tribes. He lauds tribal sovereignty -- an issue *The Oklahoman* has sidestepped taking a position on[47]--saying that it is responsible for letting Indians remain Indians.[48]

The second Point of View piece was by Clarke M. Thomas, a former editorial writer for *The Oklahoman*. Although he praised Oklahomans for their welcoming approach to Indian culture, he said that it was done "perhaps without appreciating the trials through which the tribes went - such as when their children often were forbidden to speak native languages."[49]

Opening up its op-ed pages to these writers shows a commitment on the part of *The Oklahoman* to diverse voices, although it does not ensure that the far more numerous news and feature stories will acknowledge unpleasant but historical realities when they figure importantly into news events today.

The lack of an acknowledgment of some of Indians' historical suffering was seen in a front page article August 14 announcing that two federal agencies had determined that all or parts of 64 Oklahoma counties were former Indian reservations and that some businesses in these areas could be eligible for substantial tax incentives.[50] Gov. Frank Keating is quoted as saying the decision will be of "enormous benefit to us as a state." The article made no reference to why so many Oklahoma counties are located on former Indian reservations. It did not mention the four land runs beginning in 1889 that opened up Indian territory to a land grab by white settlers.

The land runs *were* mentioned in a brief story April 24 covering a protest by a handful of American Indian students at the University of Oklahoma on the 109th anniversary of the first Oklahoma land run, which is celebrated yearly in the state. The article quotes graduate student Dan Garza who said, "'We want history to reflect the truth, not the partiality of the victory. Right here in Norman, they tell little kids that it's OK to celebrate the land run.' They don't tell them how the land run destroyed the Indian culture and way of life.'"[51]

The Modern Indian

Among the features and news stories in *The Oklahoman* in 1998 were stories about a Native American woman who runs an American Indian cafe in Santa Fe, New Mexico,[52] a one-quarter Cherokee businessman whose pizza chain was named the national minority business of the year,[53] and Indian firefighters combating a raging forest fire in Broken Bow.[54] There was also the story of an Indian physician studying the high incidence of rheumatoid arthritis in Indians.[55] And possibly the most famous Oklahoman alive today, former Cherokee tribal chairperson Wilma Mankiller, received a Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House.[56] The honor was noted in a front page article with an accompanying photograph.

On the other side of the ledger, however, are the 114 articles in the cultural category, most of which detail Indians engaged in traditional arts and crafts.

The presence of modern Indians was suggested in some articles in *The Oklahoman*. One brief announcement told of an evening of music and poetry to benefit the Indian Youth

Empowerment Project "working primarily in urban Oklahoma City with young American Indians."[57] Who are these urban youth? What are their dreams? Their problems? What is the state of *their* cultural life?

In the political category, although *The Oklahoman* announced three times that a candidate forum sponsored by American Indian students was to be held, it gave no coverage to the conference, which was described in the announcement as being about issues of concern to Native Americans in the state.[58] Who are these young political activists in the American Indian Student Association and the Native American Graduate Student Association? What are the political issues that most concern them? Do these issues differ from those of their elders?

The emphasis on Indians conveying their heritage to the rest of the state in the bulk of the cultural stories, the lack of historical context in crucial stories to explain the Indians' loss of land and culture, and the dearth of stories about Indians engaged in modern pursuits collectively reinforce the idealized 19th century Indian and the invisible 20th century one.

Good Indians and Bad Indians

The newspaper ran four editorials that mentioned Indians although only three were principally about Indians - indicating a low priority for Native American affairs by *The Oklahoman* editorial page. One editorial praised the Osage Nation for passing a right to work law.[59] The second was highly critical of President Clinton's "lust" -- in this case for campaign funds. At the end of the editorial the western Cherokees' contribution to his 1996 campaign was noted.[60] A third editorial, already cited earlier, castigated Chief Byrd's "tyranny" and called for new leadership. A fourth, also mentioned earlier, expressed concern about the Choctaw chief's tight rein on the list of registered voters. The first two editorial stances are reminiscent of those of America's first newspaper, *Public Occurences both Forreign and Domestick.* Good Indians in the eyes of Benjamin Harris were those who most resembled the whites of Boston and himself - living in towns, practicing Christianity, and praising God for his blessings. Bad Indians "lurked" on the town's edge, creatures of the forests, whom Harris accused of snatching white children.[61] In 1998 the Osage earned the praise of *The Oklahoman* for passing right to work legislation, which the newspaper has supported editorially. *The Oklahoman* took pains to say its praise of the legislation did not mean it endorsed Indian sovereignty. Native Americans earned the paper's condemnation for contributing to President Clinton's re-election, whom the newspaper has not supported.

VI. Conclusion

The Oklahoman does not ignore Native Americans. The sheer number of articles prove that. But there is something wrong when 28 stories are done on Indian education and 114 stories on Indian culture. Standing Bear rates space in *The Oklahoman* but not the Indian youth of Oklahoma City. The lack of any investigative or interpretative articles is a serious deficiency. *The Oklahoman* is not functioning as a strong watchdog to the Native American community. Neither is it acting as an effective translator of the Indian world to the non-Indian when it does no interpretative stories in a year's time. The low number of editorials also indicates that *The Oklahoman* is using little of its power in this area to comment on Indian affairs, particularly on the controversial subject of Indian sovereignty. *The Oklahoman* could help fashion a compromise between Indian sovereignty and the prerogatives of the State of Oklahoma.

The language used to cover Native Americans is no different from that used to cover other people in Oklahoma but in the choice of stories there is a difference. The overall coverage resembles that of an arts and entertainment section rather than a normal mix of politics, crime, courts, education, health and lifestyle stories. The emphasis on an idyllic past coupled with stories of bitter tribal infighting reproduce the familiar noble savage/devil incarnate syndrome. A more normal distribution of stories would produce a middle ground between these two in which ordinary, modern Indians could appear as they are to their fellow Oklahomans.

At the end of the 20th century, it is time to let go of the 19th century Indian and welcome the Indian of the 21st century.

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Running head: JAPANESE-AMERICAN INTERNMENT REDRESS

Japanese-American Internment Redress and Reparations: A Pilot Study of Media Coverage by the Los Angeles Times and Washington Post — 1986-1999

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Abstract

Japanese-American Internment Redress and Reparations:
A Pilot Study of Media Coverage by the
Los Angeles Times and Washington Post — 1986-1999

This pilot study examines media coverage in the period prior to, during, and after the passage of the Japanese-American World War II internee reparations bill in 1988. An archival search of the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post from 1986 to 1999 was used. Findings showed that both newspapers, despite their differences in the amount of articles printed, tended to be positive toward the redress and reparations bill.

Japanese-American Internment Redress and Reparations:
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The Japanese-American internment, which lasted from 1942 through 1946, has been acknowledged by the U.S. government as an injustice (Daniels, 1993; Irons, 1983, 1989; Lawrence & Matsuda, 1993; Mackey & Huntzicker, 1991; Nakanishi, 1993; Smith, 1995). Unfortunately, it has only been in the last two decades that interest in the past has grown within and outside the Japanese-American community. This is partly because those interned were not willing to talk about the internment; they looked upon World War II as a shameful period for Japanese-Americans despite the fact that there was never proof of disloyalty.

In the early 1970s, several civil groups in the Japanese-American community began the road to redress (Daniels, 1993; McClain, 1994). One result of their concerted efforts was the establishment of the national Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) in 1980 to "determine whether any wrong had been done to Japanese-Americans during, and if so, to recommend appropriate remedial action to Congress" (Daniels, 1993, p. 91). The Commission, in a report two years later, urged that every surviving internee be paid $20,000. However, it was not until 1988 when Congress implemented this recommendation and President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which bestowed a formal apology and paid $20,000 to each of the surviving internees (Daniels, 1993; Mackey & Huntzicker, 1991; Nakanishi, 1993; Sundquist, 1988). No appropriations were made for the Act that year but it did place the responsibility of searching for surviving internees on the Department of Justice, which opened the Office of Redress Administration (Daniels, 1993). The first checks to the oldest internees would not be presented until two years later.

Researchers of the Japanese-American internment have focused mainly on the historical examination of the event (Renteln, 1995; Smith, 1995; Sundquist, 1988;); issues of racism and motivation for internment (Mackey & Huntzicker, 1991); personal or oral histories of internees (DeSoto, 1993; Hane, 1990; Hansen, 1995); judicial actions taken by internees (Irons, 1983;

1989); circumstances leading up to redress and reparations (Nakanishi, 1993); and the legacy of the internment (Lawrence & Matsuda, 1993; Nagata, 1993; Yoo, 1996). A majority of the research was conducted in the last 20 years to understand how and why something like this could happen in contemporary American history.

Studies focusing on the press and the Japanese-American internment have been limited. Okihiro and Sly (1983) look at the press coverage before, during, and immediately after the internment of the Japanese-Americans in 1942. The researchers hypothesized the press reflects but does not create public opinion, and the press became a political pressure group for the exclusion, removal, and detainment of Japanese-Americans. Furthermore, the press was "crisis-oriented" and tended to respond to the actions of the government. Public policy, on the other hand, does not originate from the masses but from the ruling elite. Okihiro and Sly conclude the internment of Japanese-Americans was a "political act" that the press and public opinion did not initially favor. Later, the attitude of the press and the public shifted during a series of events stemming from the government.

Studying the internment is significant for several reasons. First, it opens the doors of resolution for the surviving internees as well as their children. Researchers have found sustaining psychological effects from the internment that have remained over half a century for internees who don't resolve their past (Loo, 1993; Nagata, 1990). Second, it educates future generations of Japanese-Americans are able to learn about their heritage and society, and about what happened to this group during World War II (Mackey & Huntzicker, 1991). While many high school history textbooks mention in passing the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, other historical events such as the Holocaust or Black slavery are prominently taught. Although the events are not comparable, the emphasis placed on one event over another lessens the impact of the internment and its effects on individuals. Third, access to information about this historical event is diminishing; the Japanese-Americans who were interned are passing away. During the internment, more than 120,000 Japanese-Americans were detained in the camps; 45 years later, when the reparations bill was passed in 1988, there was an estimated 60,000 surviving internees. Today, most of the internees who were adults during the incarceration are no longer around to tell their stories.

The print media, historically, exercises considerable influence over public opinion through its headlines, articles, editorials, and commentaries. The purpose of this study is to examine media coverage in the period prior to, during, and after the passage of the Japanese-American World War II internee reparations bill in 1988. This pilot study will compare and contrast the media coverage of two national newspapers located on opposite coasts to investigate how they reported the internment redress and reparations issue.

Method

The Los Angeles Times and Washington Post, two national newspapers, were chosen for this study. The LA Times represents a major west coast newspaper and serves a high population of Japanese-Americans either directly or through its ancillaries. The Washington Post, a national east coast newspaper, was chosen for its proximity to the political scene and issues, especially important during the 1988 Congressional session.

Before, during, and since the reparations in 1988, the issue of the Japanese-American internment has resurfaced repeatedly, especially in the newspapers. An Internet archival search and library reference search conducted recently of the Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post reveals a total of 217 articles written from January 1986 through February 1999.

Articles were searched by the key words "Japanese-American," "internment," "redress," and/or "reparations" either separately or together. Since the LA Times archives could only be accessed on the Internet from 1990, a search of the preceding years through a bound reference was done under the general headings "Japanese-Americans" and "World War II."

The archival entries of both newspapers included a brief one or two-line synopsis of the article, usually the lead. Articles were categorized using: (1) article description as indicated in the archival entry, for example "editorial" or "lifestyle"; (2) placement, such as "A section" (hard news) or "city" (for local news); and (3) article summary, usually the lead and two or three sentences. Articles were then further categorized into story type, such as (1) feature-style stories focusing on individuals, (2) hard news, such as government decision-making, and (3) editorial replies to readers' letters.

Results

The Los Angeles Times printed a total of 169 articles in relation to the Japanese-American internment reparations and redress since 1986. Of that total, 33 articles were opinion/editorials; 121 were straight or hard news articles appearing in the A, Metro, and Westside sections; five were calendar pieces, such as upcoming events; three were printed in the View section (features); two articles each in the Life & Style and San Gabriel Valley section; and one each in the City Times, Sport, and Local section.

The Washington Post averaged four articles a year since 1986 with a total of 48 articles on the redress and reparations. Seventeen appeared as editorials, opinion, or commentary pieces; 20 were hard or straight news stories appearing in the A-section; five in the Style section; three in the Outlook section; and one each in the Metro, TV Week, and Magazine sections.

Overall, the LA Times seemed to present a high amount of articles about the Japanese-American internment reparations and redress before, during, and after the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. On average, the newspaper printed 13 articles a year with the majority appearing in 1988, 1990, and 1992. These years coincide respectively with the passage of the reparations bill, the first checks issued to surviving internees, and the 50th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which authorized the detainment of Japanese-Americans.

A major theme in the articles printed in the LA Times is personal experiences about former internees. Repeatedly, stories appeared about what happened in 1942 when Japanese-Americans were detained in internment camps. For example, a September 2, 1990 article by Ian M. Rose carries the lead, "Bruce Kaji remembers his 16th birthday particularly well. It was May 9, 1942. Carrying all the clothes he could from his family's Boyle Heights home, Kaji boarded a train that day with his two sisters and parents under the watchful eyes of U.S. soldiers... ." Michael Milstein's lead in his October 3, 1994 article reads: "Running his hand over the 2-by-4 studs, scuffing the years of dust with his tennis shoes, Tomo Mukai looked for and found the number on the wall: 22799." Both articles are representative of the LA Times' usage of personal accounts about the internment.

Hard news stories in the LA Times tended to depict the facts about the redress and reparation effort. For example, "In a moving, emotional ceremony, Atty. Gen. Dick Thornburgh knelt Tuesday and presented an entire nation's apology to Mamoru Eto, a wheelchair-bound, 107-year-old Japanese-American minister who was forcibly interned during World War II," Ronald J. Ostrow writes in his October 10, 1990 article. The headline that precedes Jack Leonard's article (August 12, 1997) "Redress Claims Pressed for WWII Internment..." follows with the lead: "With only a year left before the federal government stops reparations to Japanese-Americans who suffer internment and other discrimination during World War II, several civil rights groups Monday complained that about 3,300 people are being unfairly denied redress... ."

The editorials and commentaries by the LA Times tended to sway toward a positive light regarding the reparations and redress. From 1986 to 1989, the editorial synopses were often worded as editorials that "calls for," "recommends," praises," or "hastens" the passage of the redress and reparations bill. For example, on April 22, 1988 an editorial "recommends Pres. Reagan sign bill that apologizes to Japanese-American WWII internees" while an October 3, 1989 editorial "praises the Senate's vote to guarantee a program of compensation to surviving Japanese internees in the U.S. during World War II."

From 1990 until 1999, some editorials were responses to previously printed articles in the LA Times. A March 2, 1998 editorial lead reads: "In 'An Enduring Indignity' (Feb. 24), it is suggested that during World War II about 2,200 Latin Americans of Japanese ancestry were abducted from their home countries and sent to internment camps in the United States."

Overall, the positive outweighed the negative in regards to commentaries, editorials, and letters to the editor in the LA Times. Some of the negative responses came directly from letters to the newspaper. A reader wrote in an October 23, 1990 letter, "Mothers and wives of Americans killed in action against the Japanese received, at most, a $10,000 G.I. insurance check. Japanese-American World War II internees alive today get a $20,000 government check. I am wondering if my G.I. buddies in World War II who never made it back home would think this was a fair deal!"

The LA Times itself most often counteracted the negative with the positive. Two letters written by readers on March 1, 1992 carried the heading: "Why No Tears for American Victims of War?" Within a few days on March 8, four separate positive responses to the negative letters were carried under the headline, "To Oppose Reparations to Interned Japanese-Americans is to Miss the Point Entirely." The synopses of these responses pointed out that the letters were "laced with sprinkles or bigotry" or simply "unjustified."

The heavily positive pieces in the LA Times came from a number of letters as well as commentaries. A May 23, 1991 opinion article carried the lead: "The strength of a nation lies in recognizing its past mistakes and creating a consciousness so that they are not repeated. The U.S. government has formally apologized for the unjust internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Now it is examining how to commemorate the sad chapter in U.S. history so that the lessons learned will be remembered." A January 11, 1991 letter to the editor read: "My husband and I were privileged to be the guests of Fred Okrand at the premiere showing of 'Come See the Paradise,' a factual story of the evacuation of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast during World War II."

In summary, the LA Times articles on the internment redress and reparations tended to be heavily positive. Although the newspaper printed negative news or letters to the editor regarding the bill for the redress, it always was inclined to counteract with a positive commentary or editorial.

The Washington Post averaged four articles a year with a total of 48 articles on the subject of internment, redress, and reparations from 1986 until 1999. Twenty-seven of the 48 articles appeared in 1987, 1988, and 1998 — the year before the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the year the Act was passed by Congress, and the closing of the Department of Justice Office of Redress Administration, respectively.

Twenty articles reported political activities surrounding the Japanese-American internment redress and reparations, especially during 1988 when several articles highlighted the legislation leading to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. For example, Tom Kenworthy's article on August 5, 1988 bears the headline, "Congress Approves War-Internee Fund: Cash Apology Offered to Japanese-Americans" with the lead, "The House, moving to redress what one lawmaker called 'a monumental injustice,' yesterday passed and sent to President Reagan compromise legislation offering cash reparations and the nation's apology to tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans who were interned during World War II." Straight news highlights of the 100th Congress, such as the October 23, 1988 article that summarized major legislation adopted over the last two years, discussed the redress and reparations bill.

The Post's opinion/editorial pieces as well as letters to the editor tended to be positive toward the idea and passage of the Civil Liberties Act authorizing funding to surviving Japanese-American internees. For instance, an October 19, 1990 letter read, "Cheers to The Post for featuring so prominently the story on reparations to the Japanese-Americans interned during World War II {'Years Late, U.S. Apology Still Sweet,' Metro, Oct. 11}. I was surprised, however, that while The Post correctly pointed out the gross violation of the civil right to these American citizens, it failed to mention the very real financial losses that many of these families sustained."

Another example of positive editorials by the Post includes a September 20, 1987 article, with the lead, "Last week the House took the first step toward healing a wound inflicted 45 years ago. The lawmakers passed a bill that would formally apologize for the unjust internment of 120,000 Japanese-American during World War II and provide compensation to the survivors."

Overall, the Post did not feature many personal stories of surviving internees, with nine total. These few articles were similar to the LA Times' articles. An example includes Michael Isikoff's October 10, 1990 article which began, "Senkichi Yuge, 91, had fainted the night before and for a while it looked doubtful he could withstand the plane trip from Los Angeles. But Yuge was determined to be at the Justice Department yesterday -- 'even if it was the last thing he did,' said Yumi Yuge, his granddaughter." Other personal stories bore headlines such as Marjorie William's article "The 40-Year War of Aiko Yoshinaga: A WWII Internee, Coming to Terms and Seeking more than Reparations" (August 4, 1988).

The Post's articles, in summary, were focused on political activities surrounding the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The articles leaned toward the positive rather than negative of the internment redress and reparations.

Discussion

This was a pilot study investigating media coverage before, during, and after the passage of the Japanese-American internment reparations and redress bill in 1988 using one east coast and one west coast national newspaper based on archival listings of the Los Angeles Times and Washington Post.

Overall, the LA Times printed three and a one-half times more articles than the Post in the 13-year period examined. A majority of the articles focused on general news about the redress and reparations, and personal stories of former surviving internees. Both the LA Times and the Post were favorable toward the redress and reparations. Most of what was written negatively about the redress and reparations came directly from readers' criticisms in the form of letters to the editor. However, both newspapers often counteracted the negative with positive editorials or commentaries.

These preliminary results imply that media coverage of Japanese-American internment issues on the west coast was more prominent; naturally the LA Times tended to be more empathetic toward the redress and reparations because it serves a larger population of Japanese-Americans. The LA Times leaned toward responding to negative editorials or letters with positive commentaries and/or articles. Its coverage entailed a variety of articles to highlight the achievements or success of Japanese-Americans in their community.

On the other hand, media coverage that originates from the nation's capital, where political decisions are made, was inclined toward straight or factual news. The Post did not fuel controversy surrounding the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, although it did print a few negative letters from readers.

Future research in this area would entail a closer and in-depth look into the articles written to be analyzed for specific content or wording. Another research suggestion would be to poll the public in their reaction to a cross-section of the articles presented by each newspaper. This would require finding their opinion prior to and after reading the articles on internment.

Conclusion

Research about the Japanese-American internment reparations and redress remains important for several reasons. First, the internees who were young adults during World War II are dying or are already gone and so are their personal experiences. While some of their children are still alive and, in most cases older adults (55 years and older), the internment did not have the same impact on them as their parents (Nagata, 1993). Second, there's still limited coverage in educational textbooks about the Japanese-American internment. The Holocaust and Black slavery remain as some of the most recognizable topics taught in the American educational system.

Third, discussing the internment would provide "resolution" for the surviving internees and future generations of Japanese-Americans (Loo, 1993). The stigma attached to the incarceration during World War II still remains; internees did not willingly talk about their camp experiences until recent years. Nagata (1990) states the silence and lack of emotions from these people have "perplexed" researchers. According to the author, "silence about the camps, for most Nisei, represented a way to repress the experience and, later, to protect their children from the past" (1990, p. 37).

The internees, Nagata points out, resolved that the incarceration was "a test of character" used to prove their "worthiness" in American society (1990). Furthermore, the Japanese-Americans convinced themselves those conditions "could have been worse" in the camps. Although the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II was acknowledged as an injustice against American citizens, it still remains a shameful period for them (Loo, 1993; Nagata, 1990).

Finally, the media have considerable power to influence and educate people. Okihiro and Sly (1983) quoted a Hearst (newspaper) columnist who observed, "nobody wants to know what you think. People want to know what they think" (p. 66). The power of the press is not merely a facade; it has the ability to reach out and exercise influence over the masses as it may have during the establishment of the internment camps. There are "implications that the press, through fostering and disseminating notions of the 'yellow peril,' both before and in the crucial months after Pearl Harbor, created a climate of intolerance and racism which in turn enabled the establishment of concentration camps" (Okihiro & Sly, 1983, p. 67).

Today, the media continue to exercise the ability to influence perceptions of and about this minority group. While the passage of the redress bill may "signal an inclusion of all Japanese-Americans within the scope of justice; many Caucasian-Americans continue to confuse Japanese-Americans with native Japanese, and Japan's current economic dominance has spurred new anti-Asian sentiments, which may be ventilated against Japanese-Americans" (Nagata, 1990, p. 144). Perceptions about Japanese-Americans are often born in the pages of newspapers or images broadcast on television inadvertently, and affect how they are viewed by society. Therefore, continual research into the Japanese-American internment and redress and reparations remains to be important for members of this ethnic minority group.

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Third-Person Perception and Optimistic Bias Among Urban Minority "At-Risk" Youth

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Abstract

Recent third-person perception articles suggest that optimistic bias is the mechanism underlying the perceptual bias, but fail to empirically test the assumption. Minority "at-risk" youth are neglected in both literatures, despite the fact that they are frequently the target audience for the resulting campaigns. This study sought to bridge a gap between communication and psychology by determining to what extent third-person perception and optimistic bias co-vary in a sample of urban, minority "at-risk" youth.

Findings confirm that third-person perception and optimistic bias are present in the sample. Contrary to the position that optimistic bias causes third-person perception, the findings suggest that a small inverse relationship emerged: 51% of the middle school and high school students surveyed exhibited third-person perceptions believing they were less influenced by televised safer-sex messages than were their peers), and these students were less optimistic about there chances of becoming HIV infected than their peers; 34% exhibited first-person perceptions (believing they were more influenced by the messages than were peers), and these students were more optimistic than their peers were concerning Hiv infection. The remaining 15% perceived no difference between themselves and peers in terms of message influence. Most students (89%) exhibited optimistic bias regarding their chances of avoiding HIV infection in the future.

Third-Person Perception and Optimistic Bias Among Urban Minority "At-Risk" Youth

Introduction

The basic premise of the "third-person perception" is that people believe others are more influenced by media messages than they are (Davison, 1983). Davison's conception of third-person perception included two elements: (a) individuals expect communication to have a greater effect on others than themselves, and (b) the expected impact on others may lead to action in anticipation of the communication effect. Numerous studies offer support for the first hypothesis, but the literature offers little support for the idea that misperception leads to behavior changes. In general, the term "third-person perception" has been used to describe the first hypothesis: individuals believe communication affects others more than themselves. Both experimental and survey methods have been used to test third-person perception.

Although third-person perception is well documented, less is known about potential mechanisms. In recent articles, optimistic bias (Weinstein, 1983) is frequently discussed as a possible underlying cause of third-person perception (Brosius & Engel, 1996; Duck & Mullin, 1995; Duck et al., 1995a; Duck, Terry, & Hogg, 1995; Gunther, 1991; Gunther & Mundy, 1994; Gunther & Thorson, 1992).

Weinstein (1987, 1983, 1982, 1980) shows that individuals make comparative risk assessments in an egocentric manner, paying little attention to the risk status of others when asked to determine their own relative risk. Weinstein originally labeled this phenomenon "optimistic bias." In lay terms, individuals believe they are less vulnerable to risks than others. Optimistic bias is a robust finding and has been replicated in a variety of contexts, including HIV/AIDS risk (Ellen, Boyer, Tschann & Shafer, 1996; Harris, 1996), sexually transmitted disease (STD) risk (Kaplan & Shayne, 1993; Turner, 1993), pregnancy risk (Eldridge, Lawrence, Little, Shelby & Brasfield, 1995; Smith, Gerrard, & Gibbons, 1997), cancer risk (Aiken, Febaughty, West, Johnson, & Luckett, 1995; Fontaine & Smith, 1995), smoking risk (Strecher, Kreuter & Korbin, 1995), substance abuse risk (Hansen, Raynor, & Wolkenstein, 1991; Miller, 1991), and general health risks (Glanz & Yang, 1996; Hoorens, 1996).

Minority "At-Risk" Youth and Sexual Risk Perception: A Special Case

A common deficit in third-person perception and optimistic bias research is the over-reliance on college student and/or adult samples. Few researchers studied adolescents (Capps, 1996; Hingson, Strunin, Berlin, & Heeren, 1990; Whalen, Henker, O'Neil, Hollingshead, Hoilman, & Moore, 1994; Welkenhuysen, Everkiebooms, Decruyenaere, & Vandenberghe, 1996), and fewer still studied minorities (Ellen, Boyer, Tschawn, & Shafer, 1996; Goodloe, Tross, Abdul-Quadar, Des Jarais, & Rosenblum, 1990; Perloff, Neundorf, Giles, Tsan-Kuo, & Jeffries, 1992).

Purposes of the Study

The study seeks primarily to bridge a gap between psychology and communication by determining to what extent third-person perception and optimistic bias co-vary in one sample: the two literatures remain largely unconnected despite the obvious similarities.

Related secondary purposes include (a) documenting third-person perception and optimistic bias in an urban, minority, "at-risk" youth sample and (b) identifying the best predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception.

Potential Mechanisms Underlying Third-Person Perception and/or Optimistic Bias

Numerous underlying mechanisms have been suggested in optimistic bias and third-person perception research. The most promising of these include psychological distance, (Buehler, Griffin, & MacDonald, 1994; Duck & Mullin, 1995; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995; Frewer, Shepherd, & Sparks, 1994; Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Gunther, 1991; Hakmiller, 1996; Helweg-Larson, 1994; Hoorens & Bunk, 1993; Klar, Medding, & Sarel, 1996; McCoy, Gibbons, Reis, Gerrard, Luus, & Suftka, 1992; Miller, 1990; Rucinski & Salmon, 1990; Weinstein, 1989) and ego-enhancement (Duck et al., 1995; Gunther & Mundy, 1994; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996; Perloff, 1989; Smith et al., 1997

Psychological distance.

The best documented mechanism hypothesized to cause optimistic bias and third-person perception is psychological distance. Psychological distance refers to the way in which individuals target "peers" when asked to make comparative risk judgments. For instance, ill patients compare themselves with patients worse off than themselves (Kamler, Irwin, Stone, & Millstein, 1987; Taylor & Brown, 1994), gay men believe they are less likely to contract AIDS than other gay men (Bauman & Siegel, 1987; Joseph, Montgomery, Emmons, Kirscht, Kessler, Ostrow, Wortman, O'Brien, & Eshleman, 1987), and adolescent hemophiliacs recognize their escalated risk status compared to healthy peers for health-related threats, but demonstrate optimistic bias for non-health risks (Kamler, Irwin, Stone, & Millstein, 1987).

Self-esteem.

Self-esteem may be defined as a relatively stable set of self-attitudes reflecting description and self-evaluation of an individual's behavior and attributes (Piers, 1996).

According to Weinstein (1987), the relationship between self-esteem and optimistic bias is a complex one, involving several variables: (a) individuals tend to engage in downward comparisons, comparing themselves to people at elevated degrees of risk, in order to maintain self-esteem, (b) individuals may also overestimate their skills that would prevent risk, and (c) failure to avoid a hazard only threatens self-esteem if the hazard is controllable. Weinstein (1987) cites numerous studies that test the third statement (Weinstein, 1980, 1982; Zakay, 1984).

A problem with each of these studies is a failure to measure self-esteem. The studies measured "controllability" (for example, people are more optimistic about avoiding diseases tied to behaviors than disease passed through family lines), and inferred that such differences were caused by self-esteem. There are a few recent exceptions to this. Smith, Gerrard and Gibbons' (1997) study of college women's perception of vulnerability to unplanned pregnancy used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in conjunction with standard optimistic bias scales (Weinstein, 1980). Smith and associates (1997) found that self-esteem was a significant predictor of perceived vulnerability, with low self-esteem women reporting higher vulnerability than high self-esteem women were.

Numerous third-person perception researchers have also suggested that self-esteem may be an underlying mechanism, however these studies did not focus on health (Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996; Perloff, 1989) and/or they did not measure self-esteem (Gunther & Mundy, 1994). Measurement of self-esteem would allow testing the assumptions made by researchers in optimistic bias and third-person perception possible.

The Influence of Individual Differences on Optimistic Bias and Third-Person Perception

Gender.

Although it consistently documented that boys tend to take more risks than girls do (Arnett, 1992; Darvill & Johnson, 1991; Jessor & Jessor, 1977; Langley & Williams, 1992), gender differences in risk-perception are less clear. For instance, Strecher and associates (1995) found that adult men were more optimistic than adult women concerning their risk of heart attack or cancer related to smoking cigarettes. Similarly, sixth grade boys were more optimistic than sixth grade girls about their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (Whalen, Henker, O'Neil, Hollingshead, Holman, & Moore, 1994). In contrast, several other studies reported no difference in bias due to gender (Eiser et al., 1993; Fontaine & Smith, 1995; Whalen et al., 1994b; Weinstein, 1987, 1989).

Third-person perception studies most frequently focus on message variables, so little is known about the possible influence of gender; however, Rojas and colleagues (1996) found no difference in third-person perception (in adults) due to a number of demographic variables including gender.

Grade level.

As described above, individual difference variables are frequently grouped together as "demographics". Thus, differences in perceptual bias between individuals of varying education level (Glynn & Ostman, 1988; Willnat, 1996) may have as much to do with age and/or grade level as they do with academic achievement (a section on academic achievement follows this section). Strecher and colleagues (1995) found that age (in addition to gender and academic achievement) predicted differences in optimistic bias in adults in estimations of their personal risk of heart attack and cancer. The amount of bias increased with age. Numerous other studies confirm the finding that bias increases with age (Cohn, Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1995; Dolcini, Gromski, & Zawisza, 1989; Job, Fleming, & Morgan, 1992; Quadrel, Fischoff, & Davis, 1993; Strecher, Kreuter, & Kobrin, 1995; Turner, 1993; Weinstein, 1987). However, only one of these studies included adolescents under the age of 18. Pairing teen-aged children with their parents, Quadrel and colleagues (1993) reported that adults were more optimistic about a variety of risks (including auto accident, alcoholism, unwanted pregnancy, being mugged, getting sick from air pollution, and getting sick from pesticide or radiation poisoning) than their children. In fact, both the parents and the children believed the adults were more invulnerable than the teenagers were.

Less research investigates the relationship between age and third-person perception. In adults, first-person perceptions have been shown to increase with age (Glynn & Ostman, 1988). No comparisons between children, adolescents and/or adults have been tested to date.

Academic achievement.

Klaczynski and Fauth (1996) reported that college students exhibited considerable bias in estimations of the probability that they would experience more desirable and fewer undesirable life events than their peers did. Although, nearly all of the students exhibited some degree of optimistic bias, students with high academic achievement were significantly more biased than their peers with low academic achievement were. Strecher, Kreuter, and Kobrin (1995) found similar results, reporting that adults with high academic achievement were more optimistic about their risk of heart attack and cancer than were their peers with low academic achievement.

Third-person perception researchers have not yet predicted differences in bias due to academic achievement specifically. Two studies focused on differences in educational attainment, with the more educated believing others were more influenced by the media than they were (Glynn & Ostman, 1988; Willnat, 1996).

Content-specific knowledge.

Is a little knowledge a dangerous thing? While few third-person perception studies focus on academic achievement, many predicted increases in perceived influences on self vs. others by content-specific knowledge. Individuals who perceived themselves as "experts," or those having advanced knowledge consistently demonstrated a greater third-person perception than their less knowledgeable peers (Guthrie, 1995; Lasorsa, 1989). In at least one case, actually having knowledge of a topic also increased the third-person perception (Price & Tewksbury, 1996); however, the mere perception of expert status was enough to produce the third-person perception (Guthrie, 1995).

Although the influence of knowledge is a consistent finding in third-person perception research, none of the studies use health-related messages. In addition, optimistic bias research has included academic achievement or intelligence (described above), but has failed to measure content-specific knowledge of the hazard studied.

Media Variables

While optimistic bias is not a theory of mass communication, media messages have been included in some studies, and in each case have been shown to have an impact on the strength of the effect. Messages incorporating positive cues increased optimistic bias, while messages with negative cues have been shown to decrease the level of bias (Cote, 1994; Darvill & Johnson, 1991; Weinstein, 1980).

Similarly, numerous third-person perception studies have focused on media variables such as persuasive content (Gibbon & Durkin, 1995), positive vs. negative content (Gunther & Mundy, 1994; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996), and personalization of messages (Batista, 1991), and production quality (Duck et al., 1995). Other media variables, in contrast, are less frequently considered. Discussion of neglected media variables follows.

Media use and attitude toward safer-sex messages (the media).

Perhaps an extension of the neglect of adolescent participants in optimistic bias and third-person perception research is the failure to include media variables in study design. Different mass media serve various social/ psychological functions at different stages of adolescence (Fine, Mortimer & Roberts, 1990).

One of the first studies to include media use and attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media) as predictors of third-person perception was published recently (Price, Huang, & Tewksbury, 1997). The study focused on attitude towards news coverage, finding that media orientation (defined as general beliefs about news), media schemas and media use modestly predicted the magnitude of the third-person perception. Given the primacy of the mass media in adolescence, it is significant that the influence of media use has been neglected in optimistic bias and third-person perception research. This study seeks to remedy this by including measures of media use and attitudes toward televised health messages.

Hypotheses

Theory discussed in the previous sections leads to several hypotheses related to optimistic bias and third-person perception in the context of sex risk perception.

Hypotheses are summarized here in the order they will be tested and presented in subsequent sections.

Optimistic Bias

Hypothesis 1: Individuals believe they are less likely than others to contract HIV/AIDS later in life (optimistic bias).

Hypothesis 2: Optimistic bias will increase as psychological distance increases (predicts mean differences between each target level in optimistic bias measure).

Hypothesis 3: Optimistic bias will be higher for boys than for girls.

Hypothesis 4: Increases in optimistic bias will be predicted by several individual differences; specifically, increases in grade level, academic achievement, content-specific knowledge, and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 5: Optimistic bias will increase as media use increases and attitude toward safer-sex messages decrease.

Third-Person Perception

Hypothesis 6: Individuals believe they are less likely to be influenced than others by televised safer-sex messages (third-person perception).

Hypothesis 7: Third-person perception will increase as psychological distance increases (predicts mean differences between each target level in third-person perception measure).

Hypothesis 8: The third-person perception will be higher for boys than for girls.

Hypothesis 9: Increases in third-person perception will be predicted by several individual differences; specifically, increases in grade level, academic achievement, content-specific knowledge, and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 10: The third-person perception will increase as media use increases and attitude toward televised safer-sex messages decreases.

Third-Person Perception and Optimistic Bias

Hypothesis 11: Increases in third-person perception will be paired by increases in optimistic bias.

Methods

To test the hypotheses described above, a survey was administered to a sample of minority "at-risk" youth in grades four through twelve in urban New Jersey. The survey was administered in three parts at three separate times.

Study Participants

The students who participated in this study attended public school in urban New Jersey. The city's health statistics are among the worst in the state, with one of the highest rates for communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases (Coleman, 1997).

Three programs that service "at-risk" elementary, middle and high-school students were selected as the study site. Due to differences in program sizes the sample over-represents middle school students (grades 6-8). Because all three programs practice "open enrollment" (students may enter or leave a program at any point in the year), the number of students enrolled varies weekly. A total of 230 students were enrolled during the time-frame of the study, but only 180 students were enrolled during the initial two (of three) data collection sessions. These 180 students were the main study population for the study. Parents of 98% of the 230 students enrolled gave consent for their child(ren)'s participation in the study. Of the 225 students with parental consent, 98% agreed to participate in the study. A total of 221 students (of a possible 230 enrolled) ranging in age from 8 to 17 (M = 12.1, SD = 1.9) agreed to participate in at least one of the three data collection sessions for the study. The sample was 54% female and 92% African-American. Most students were enrolled in the middle-school program (63%), fewer in the high-school program (20%), and the fewest in the elementary-school program (17%).

Survey data were collected from the students on three occasions over a six month period, during normal program meeting times.

Attrition

Although 221 students participated in the study, not all students completed all measures. Due to the practice of "open-enrollment," the sample varied in size and composition across time. Of the 177 students that participated in Session 1, 96% participated in Session 2, and 55% participated in Session 3. In addition, 44 new students joined the study in Session 3, resulting in an n of 122 for that session and overall n of 221 for the study. Participants in Session 3 varied little from the first two sessions in gender (50% female) and ethnicity (93% African-American), but were different in age: 69% middle-school students, 21% elementary-school students, and 10% high-school students.

All of the attrition described above resulted from students leaving their respective programs. There was no attrition due to absenteeism. There were also no students who remained in the program but dropped out of the study.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in the study are third-person perception and optimistic bias; however, it should be noted that optimistic bias is treated as both an independent and a dependent variable due to the assertion that optimistic bias causes third-person perception (Gunther & Mundy, 1993). Existing measures were used for all variables despite possible flaws inherent in the measures. Without this control in place, comparison between the findings of the current study and existing research would be less valid.

Optimistic Bias

Optimistic bias was measured with a standard instrument designed by Weinstein (1984). The procedure asked students to compare their relative risk of HIV/AIDS later in life with three target "others " For the primary measure of optimistic bias, students were asked, "compared to other students in the U.S., my chances of getting HIV/AIDS later in life are ___." Following Weinstein's (1984) method, comparative risk assessment was measured on a 7-point scale (-3 = "much less" than other students in the USA, +3 = "much greater" than other students in the USA). A mean of zero would indicate no bias, either optimistic or pessimistic on the group level.

Third-person perception

Various procedures for measuring third-person perception appear throughout the literature. The measure in this study was adapted from Duck and Mullin (1995). Study participants were exposed to two 30 second health-related televised messages described below:

> Message 1: (Confide advertisement). A young Latin woman is shown shopping with a friend and later calling Confide for her HIV test results. The slogan (and focus) of the message is "it's time to know."
>
> Message 2: (New Jersey Network PSA). A young Latin woman appears in the waiting room of a clinic awaiting her HIV test. She's not sure of her partner and fears she may have been infected. The slogan (and focus) of the message is "it's better to know than to be left in the dark."

Message 1 was being broadcast on commercial television during the study period. Message 2 had been broadcast on the New Jersey Network over the past three years. The messages featured young female minority spokespersons which (a) contradicted the stereotype that HIV/AIDS is a gay male problem and (b) likely increased the relevance to the study sample.

After viewing each message, participants answered two items: "How much do you think (a) you, (b) other students in the USA would be influenced by messages like this?" Responses were in the form of Likert-type scales (1 = "not at all," 2 = "extremely influenced"). Because each student answered two items following both messages, there were four responses per student.

Recall that optimistic bias items incorporated a self/other comparison in one item. Because item wording for optimistic bias and third-person perception was different, creation of third-person perception measure required one additional step: subtracting the assessment of perceived influence on self from perceived influence on others. This procedure is consistent with existing research (e.g., Duck & Mullin, 1995). The third-person perception measures for both messages were highly correlated, $\underline{r} = .50$, $\underline{p} < .001$. The measures were then summed to create a composite third-person perception measure. The new variable ranged from -12 to +12.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study, listed in order of the hypotheses, were: (a) psychological distance, (b) gender, (c) grade level, (d) academic achievement (GPA), (e) content specific (HIV/AIDS) knowledge, (f) self-esteem, (g) media use, (h) attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media), and (i) optimistic bias.

Psychological Distance

To examine the effect of psychological distance on optimistic bias and third-person perception, psychological distance was manipulated by presenting multiple targets for comparison (best friend, other students in New Jersey, and other students in the USA). These targets were presumed to increase psychological distance for each subsequent comparison. A similar technique has been used to manipulate psychological distance in previous optimistic bias (Helweg-Larsen, 1994; Weinstein, 1989) and third-person perception (Duck et al., 1995, Perloff et al., 1992) studies.

Demographics

Students self-reported gender and grade level was also collected for use in this study. Program rosters were available to complete missing responses and for cross-checking purposes.

Academic Achievement

Three items asked students to report letter grades on their last report cards (end of the year) for three subjects: mathematics, English, and science. These three subjects were selected because they reflect the focus of the programs. The scores for the three subjects were averaged together to create an overall score for academic achievement, subsequently referred to as GPA (grade point average) (0 = "F," 4 = "A").

Content-Specific Knowledge

Content specific knowledge refers to HIV/AIDS knowledge within the context of this study. A subset of items from the American Red Cross' "Act Smart" program, designed for middle-school and high-school students was used to measure HIV/AIDS knowledge. Students identified 18 statements about the nature of HIV transmission and prevention as being true or false. The proportion of correct responses (range 0-100) measures HIV/AIDS knowledge for each student. The overall internal consistency of the composite measure was low, K-R20 = .48, due to differences in difficulty level of items. For instance, 98% of the students correctly agreed with the statement that "people can get AIDS by having sex," while only 19% correctly disagreed with the statement that "AIDS and HIV are the same thing."

Self-Esteem

Students' responses to Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventories administered by the school programs were used to measure self-esteem. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale provides a total score and six subscale scores. The most reliable measure, and the one used for analysis here, was the total score. The total score has a possible range of 0 to 80, with higher numbers indicating more favorable self-concept. For consistency across subsections, percentile scores (based on national norms) will be used for analysis.

Media Use

Media use was measured by asking students to indicate how many hours in a typical school day they spent watching TV, listening to music, reading for fun, and playing video or computer games. The four items were taken from Greenberg, Tokinoya, Ku, and Li's (1989) international study of adolescents' uses of the mass media. Students used a 5-point scale to report the number of hours they were engaged in media activities on a typical school day (0 = none, 5 = 5 or more). Summing the amount of time students reported using the media created a composite measure.

Attitude Toward Safer-Sex Messages (the media)

Following exposure to the two safer-sex messages, attitude towards the media was measured by asking students how much they liked and how much they trusted "messages like this." Consistent with Greenberg and associates (1989), the four items (two for each message) were measured on a 4-point scale (0 = "very little," 3 = "very much").

Because all four items load onto one factor and the resulting scale demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$), responses were summed to create a composite measure of attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media). The resulting measure ranges from zero to 12, with a higher number indicating a more favorable attitude toward safer-sex messages.

Findings

Optimistic Bias

Optimistic bias at the group level.

Optimistic bias in a group is demonstrated by a group mean significantly less than zero (Weinstein, 1989). Hypothesis 1 predicted that urban, minority, "at-risk" youth would believe they were less likely than others to contract HIV/AIDS later in life. A single-sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis that the mean of optimism was significantly different from zero. As predicted in H1, the students exhibited optimistic bias, $t(176) = -14.9$, $p < .001$. This finding is consistent with the existing optimistic bias literature.

Because the mean for optimism (-1.8, SD = 1.6) on a possible range from -3 to +3 was significantly less than zero, the term "optimistic bias" will be used throughout the current study to describe personal vs. other risk assessments. This guideline is consistent with current practices (e.g., Weinstein, 1989).

Optimistic bias and psychological distance.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that optimistic bias would increase as psychological distance increased. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to test mean differences in optimistic bias for three levels of psychological distance. As predicted, there were significant mean differences in self perceived vulnerability to HIV/AIDS when compared to other students in the USA (M = -1.8, SD = 1.6), other students in New Jersey (M = -1.8, SD = 1.6), and "best friends" (M = -1.4, SD = 1.6), F (2, 348) = 5.75, p < .01. Bonferroni post hoc comparison indicates that students' perceived personal risk relative to their "best friend" was less optimistic than their perceived personal risk relative to "other students in New Jersey" and "other students in the USA." Consistent with the prediction made in Hypothesis 2, students perceived that they were less prone than others were to negative outcomes, however not for all levels of psychological distance.

Individual differences.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that optimistic bias would be higher for boys than for girls. Contrary to the expectation, no gender difference in optimistic bias was found, t (175)= -.1, p = .95). As discussed previously, existing findings were evenly split, with half of the published studies reporting gender differences and half reporting no gender differences.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that increases in optimistic bias would be predicted by increases in several individual differences, specifically grade level, academic achievement, content-specific knowledge, and self-esteem. Results in Table 1, indicate that only one of these variables, self-esteem, was a correlate of optimistic bias.

Recall that optimistic bias was indicated by a negative value, so the signs on the correlation coefficients on Row 1 should be reversed for interpretation. Thus, increases in optimistic bias were correlated with increases in self-esteem. As predicted, students with higher self-esteem also tended to be the most optimistic regarding their invulnerability to HIV/AIDS. This suggests that self-esteem acts as a psychological barrier to perception of negative health outcomes. The positive relationship between optimistic bias and self-esteem is consistent with previous research. The finding is relevant to the study programs because self-esteem scales are used annually to identify students with low self-esteem for possible counseling intervention. The current findings seem to indicate that students with higher self-esteem should also be identified because they tend to be overly optimistic about health hazards associated with sexual risks. No relationship was found between optimistic bias and grade level, attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media), academic achievement, content-specific (HIV/AIDS) knowledge or media use. This finding is inconsistent with the prediction, but consistent with Weinstein's (1989) assertion that optimistic bias is unaffected by demographic variables like academic achievement and educational level. Because this study was the first to use content-specific knowledge to predict optimistic bias, there are no results available for comparison.

Media variables.

In addition to demographic variables, Table 1 also shows the relationship between optimistic bias and media variables. Hypothesis 5 predicted that increases in media use and decreases in attitudes toward safer-sex messages would predict increases in optimistic bias. Contrary to the prediction, no such relationships were evident. No previous studies have used these media variables to predict optimistic bias.

Third-Person Perception

Hypothesis 6 predicted that individuals would believe that they were less likely than others to be influenced by health related media messages. Differences in perceived message influence between "best friends" (M = -.24, SD = 1.4) and "other students in the USA" (M = .47, SD = 2.1), were evident after exposure to both safer-sex messages, t (169) = -4.6, p < .001. The finding that individuals believed that messages influenced others more than themselves is consistent with the third-person perception literature. However, there was more of a balance between third-person perceptions and first-person perceptions in the current study than is usually reported. Specifically, 51% of the sample exhibited a classic third-person perception (perceived themselves to be less influenced than other students in the USA by the safer-sex messages), 34% exhibited a first-person perception (perceived themselves to be more influenced than other students in the USA by the messages), and the remaining 15% perceived no difference between themselves and other students in the USA in terms of message influence.

Third-person perception and psychological distance.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that third-person perception would increase as psychological distance increased. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to test mean differences in third-person perception for three levels of psychological distance, as shown on Table 2. As predicted, there were significant mean differences in self perceived message influence when compared to other students in the USA (M = .47, SD = 2.1), other students in New Jersey (M = .20, SD = 2.0), and "best friends" (M = -.24, SD =

1.4), $F(2, 338) = 14.9$, $p < .001$. The negative mean for "best friends" indicates that students believed they would be more influenced than their best friends would by the safer-sex messages. In contrast, students believed they would be less influenced than other students in the state would and in the country would by the messages. Bonferroni post hoc comparison confirms that students' perceived message influence on themselves relative to their "best friend" was different from their perceived message influence on themselves relative to "other students in New Jersey" and "other students in the USA." Students perceived themselves as more influenced than their best friends by safer-sex messages, but less influenced than distant "others" by the same messages. Consistent with the prediction made in Hypothesis 7, students perceived that they were less likely to be influenced than "others" by safer-sex messages.

Individual differences.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that third-person perception would be higher for boys than for girls. Contrary to the expectation, no gender difference in third-person perception was found, $t(168)= 1.3$, $p = .19$. Few previous third-person perception studies included gender and/or other individual difference variables in study design.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that increases in several individual differences, specifically grade level, academic achievement, content-specific (HIV/AIDS) knowledge, and self-esteem would predict increases in third-person perception. As shown on Table 3, some but not all of these relationships emerged.

Grade level emerged as the strongest correlate of third-person perception, but it was an inverse relationship. Increases in third-person perception were correlated with decreases in grade level, meaning that as students progressed through grade levels, they became less likely to perceive themselves as being less influenced than others regarding message influence. The inverse relationship between third-person perception and grade level is inconsistent with previous findings. However, few of these studies included children and/or adolescents.

An inverse relationship was also demonstrated between third-person perception and HIV/AIDS knowledge, indicating that the more students knew about HIV/AIDS, the less likely they were to believe they were less influenced than others by safer-sex messages. In other words, knowledge reduced third-person perception. The inverse relationship between third-person perception and content-specific knowledge is also inconsistent with previous findings (e.g., Price & Tewksbury, 1996), which suggest that content-specific knowledge increases third-person perception. It is important to note, however, that none of the previous studies included children and/or adolescents, and none of the studies used pro-social health messages. Further discussion of inverse relationships between third-person perception and other variables takes place in the discussion section.

Contrary to the prediction, no relationship was found between third-person perception and academic achievement or self-esteem. These variables were included in the design because each has been shown to be related to optimistic bias. By pairing hypotheses, this study sought to assess the degree to which optimistic bias and third-person perception co-varied with common correlates. It does not appear that academic achievement or self-esteem were related to third-person perception among "at-risk" youth; however, this is the first study to predict their influence on third-person perception.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that increases in third-person perception would be predicted by individual difference variables, including grade level, academic achievement, content-specific knowledge, and self-esteem. Standard multiple regression was used to test the prediction. Including only the two individual difference variables which correlated with third-person perception (grade level and HIV/AIDS knowledge), a significant model was produced, Adj. $r^2 = .03$, $p < .05$. The resulting model suggests that third-person effect increases as grade level ($\beta = -.13$) and content specific knowledge ($\beta = -.09$) decrease. However, Table 3 shows that grade level and HIV/AIDS knowledge were also strongly correlated with each other, indicating a problem with multi-collinearity. This problem is resolved by removing the weaker predictor (HIV/AIDS knowledge) from the model best predicting third-person perception. Analysis of residual plots indicates that assumptions regarding normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were met.

Media variables.

Hypothesis 10 predicted that increases in media use and decreases in attitudes toward safer-sex messages would predict increases in third-person perception. Results in Table 3 suggest a small, negative correlation between third-person perception and attitudes toward safer-sex messages. This finding indicates that third-person perception was highest for students who said they did not like or trust safer-sex messages.

Contrary to the prediction, no relationship was found between third-person perception and media use. Only one previous study used media use and attitudes to predict third-person perception, finding both were correlates and moderate predictors (Price, Huang, & Tewksbury, 1997).

Optimistic Bias and Third-Person Perception

The final hypothesis, based on Gunther and Mundy's (1994) assertion that optimistic bias causes the third-person perception, predicted a positive relationship between the two dependent variables. Contrary to expectations, third-person perception appears to *decrease* as optimistic bias *increases*. The relationship, as shown on Table 3, was small and in the opposite direction predicted. At first glance, it appears that optimistic students (compared to others, I'm less likely to get HIV/AIDS) believed the safer-sex messages influenced themselves more than others (first-person perception) and pessimistic students (compared to others, I'm more likely to get HIV/AIDS) believed the safer-sex messages influenced others more than themselves.

However, interpreting the inverse relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception is a little more complicated. Most of the students (89%) were optimistic that they were less likely than others to get HIV/AIDS later in life. Thus, the inverse relationship indicates varying degrees in optimism by third-person perception: Students who believed the safer-sex messages influenced themselves more than others (first-person effect) were more optimistic about their chances of avoiding HIV/AIDS than students who believed the safer-sex messages influenced others more than themselves (third-person perception), t, (138) = -2.2, p< .05, though most students were optimistic (as was established by the confirmation of H1). Simply put, 51% of the students exhibited third-person perceptions, and these students were less optimistic than their peers were; 34% exhibited first-person perceptions, and these students were more optimistic than their peers were. The remaining 15% perceived no difference between themselves and others in terms of message influence. Most students (89%) were optimistic.

Contrary to the current finding, a positive relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception has been suggested in several third-person perception studies (Duck, Terry, & Hogg, 1995; Gunther & Mundy, 1994; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996; Perloff, 1989), but never tested. Because this is the first study to test such a relationship, there are no results to compare the finding to.

Predicting Optimistic Bias and Third-Person Perception

Standard multiple regression was used to identify the best predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception. Table 4 compares the predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception. Analysis of residual plots indicates that assumptions regarding normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were met.

Self-esteem was the best predictor of optimistic bias, with higher self-esteem predicting a greater degree of bias. Although this finding appears counter-intuitive, the rationale behind it is sound: Students with high self-esteem are self-assured and confident in their knowledge and choices, resulting in a false sense of security when faced with decisions about sexual risks. The finding that increases in self-esteem predict increases in optimistic bias is consistent with existing research (e.g., Weinstein, 1989).

Although third-person perception researchers (e.g., Gunther & Mundy, 1994) assume that optimistic bias causes the third-person perception, it must also be considered that the opposite is possible. Perhaps the belief that safer-sex messages on TV influence others more than themselves (or vice versa) leads people to the misperception that others are more at risk of HIV infection than they are. The inclusion of third-person perception as a significant predictor of optimistic bias suggests this may be the case. Students who believed that they were more influenced than others by the safer-sex messages exhibited a lesser degree of optimistic bias than their peers.

Attitude toward safer-sex messages (the media) emerged as the best predictor of third-person perception. As predicted, students who liked and trusted televised safer-sex messages perceived themselves to be more influenced by such messages, and students with more negative attitudes toward safer-sex messages perceived others as being more influenced by them. This finding is consistent with previous findings (Price, Huang, & Tewksbury, 1997), though it is only the second to use attitude toward the media to predict third-person perception and the first to do so within the context of health related messages.

The remaining variable in the model is optimistic bias, with decreases in third-person perception predicted by increases in optimistic bias. The model contributes to existing knowledge by including two infrequently (if ever) used variables (attitude toward safer-sex messages and optimistic bias). However, the overall variance explained by the model was low and the relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception was in the opposite direction predicted, requiring additional research to confirm and expand the model.

As Table 4 indicates, there were no shared predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception. Given that one was uniquely predicted by self-esteem, and the other by a media variable, it would be fair to assume that both optimistic bias and third-person perception contribute independently to the understanding of sex risk perception among "at-risk" youth. Additional research should investigate independent contributions to the understanding of sex risk perception made by optimistic bias and third-person perception and possible interaction effects.

Discussion

The hypotheses tested in this study related to two purposes stated in the introduction: (a) Bridging a gap between psychology and communication by comparing the influence of individual differences on optimistic bias and third-person perception. (b) Documenting perceptual bias in an urban, minority "at-risk" sample. A third related purpose was to identify predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception.

Optimistic Bias and Third-person perception Among Urban, Minority "At-Risk" Youth

Before this study, few researchers interested in optimistic bias and third-person perception studied middle school and/or high school students, and fewer still studied minorities. Weinstein (1989) recognized the over-reliance on college students over the first decade of optimistic bias research, yet he sought to remedy the problem with a "community-wide" telephone survey, which excluded respondents under the age of 18. The neglect of adolescents is especially problematic within the context of sex risk perception because experimentation with risk and the formation of lifelong habits are formed during this time period (Fleming, 1996; Kegeles, Adler & Irwin, 1988; Udry & Billy, 1987). The over-reliance on Euro-American samples is problematic as well because adolescents of different races and cultural backgrounds initiate sex risk behaviors at different times and for different reasons (Udry, 1988; Udry, Billy & Morris, 1985). It is also documented that urban youth are more likely to take sex risks at earlier ages and are more likely to drop out of school than their suburban and rural counterparts (Coleman, 1997).

This study sought to rectify areas of neglect in previous studies by selecting urban, minority "at-risk" youth as a sample. Hypotheses 1 and 8 predicted the presence of optimistic bias and third-person perception among "at-risk" youth. Support was found for each hypothesis, indicating that both concepts are appropriate frameworks for talking about sex risk perception among minority "at-risk" youth.

While the study findings indicate that optimistic bias and third-person perception are appropriate frameworks for studying "at-risk" youth, a number of the findings differ from existing research based on college educated and/or community-based adult samples, which largely consisted of Euro-Americans.

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the gap between the two literatures was accomplished in three ways. The first was the use of paired hypotheses. Significant predictors from previous optimistic bias findings were used in the present study as predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception This resulted in the testing of several new hypotheses predicting third-person perception. Similarly, significant predictors from previous third-person perception findings were used in the present study as predictors of third-person perception and optimistic bias, resulting new hypotheses predicting optimistic bias. Another advantage of the current study over previous research was the measurement of self-esteem. Finally, the current study bridges the gap between psychology and communication by empirically testing the relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception.

Smith, Gerrard and Gibbons (1997) were the first to measure self-esteem in an optimistic bias study, finding a positive relationship between optimistic bias about health risks and self-esteem in adult women. The present study replicates this finding for "at-risk" youth, finding that optimistic bias rises as self-esteem rises. This finding is especially important for people who work with "at-risk" youth. For example, the programs used for the present study administer the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scales annually to identify students with low self-esteem for intervention through counseling. The present findings would suggest that students with high self-esteem are more likely to underestimate their personal risk of health hazards than students with low self-esteem. Thus, an additional target group should be identified.

Numerous predictors of third-person perception were used as predictors of optimistic bias for the first time in the present study. These included content-specific knowledge, media use, attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media), and preference for media format. None of these emerged as significant predictors of optimistic bias. This finding further contributes to the argument that optimistic bias and third-person perception are not "the same thing" or that one causes the other.

Numerous predictors of optimistic bias were used as predictors of third-person perception. Many of these variables were used rarely, if ever, in third-person perception studies prior to the current study. These included gender, grade level, academic achievement, and self-esteem. With the exception of grade level, none of these emerged as significant predictors of third-person perception. This finding also contributes to the argument that optimistic bias and third-person perception are not "the same thing" or that one causes the other.

One third-person perception study (Glynn & Ostman, 1988) reported a positive relationship between first-person perceptions and education level. The present study partially replicates this finding by demonstrating a positive relationship between first-person perceptions and grade level. Glynn and Ostman's study (1988) did not include adolescent participants and was not health oriented (the research context was public opinion), so the current finding goes further than mere replication. The inverse relationship between grade level and third-person perception was counter to the direction of the hypothesis. This finding should be interpreted with caution. Given that all significant predictors of third-person perception were negative correlates and counter hypothetical, it is possible that sample characteristics or measurement error are responsible for the findings. Additional research using adult and adolescent participants is necessary to explicate the findings.

Price, Huang, and Tewksbury (1997) were the first to report a relationship between third-person perception, media use and attitudes toward the media. Both media use and attitude toward news were moderate predictors of third-person perception. The present study partially replicates and extends Price, Huang and Tewksbury's findings by showing that attitudes toward safer-sex messages also moderately predict third-person perception. Naturally, "attitudes toward news" and "attitudes toward safer sex messages" are not the same thing; however, both findings indicate that the broader concept of "attitudes toward the media" should be further investigated in third-person perception studies. The inverse relationship between third-person perception and attitude toward safer sex messages is not inconsistent with Price and colleagues finding because participants in the current study were exposed to pro-social health messages as opposed to "bad" news in the previous study. No relationship was found between media use and third-person perception in the current study.

Optimistic bias and third-person perception.

While Gunther and Mundy (1993) suggested that "biased optimism" may be the cause of third-person perception, the present study is the first to empirically test a relationship between the two concepts. Although a relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception was found, it was small and in the opposite direction predicted. As optimistic bias increased, third-person perception decreased; in addition, the two constructs shared only 5% of variance.

Ruling out a strong association between optimistic bias and third-person perception, what patterns emerged among the other study variables? Do optimistic bias and third-person perception co-vary with the same individual difference and media variables or are they separate phenomenon which may work together in understanding risk behavior and reaction to risk messages?

The best evidence in support of "co-variation" emerged from the role of psychological distance in perceptual bias. The confirmation of Hypotheses 2 and 9 indicates that both optimistic bias and third-person perception were influenced by psychological distance. Repeated measures ANOVA models were highly significant in both cases. Minor differences should be noted in post-hoc analysis between the two; however, a similar pattern is evident. Mean differences between the "best friend" and "New Jersey students" level emerged on the third-person perception and the optimistic bias measures. Similarly, no mean differences between "New Jersey students" and "USA" students level were evident for third-person perception or optimistic bias. This finding is different from the majority of published research in that a peak emerges in some cases when asked to make assessments about other students in New Jersey. It could be argued that such assessments may be the result of the correct perception that some of the hazards are actually greater for students in New Jersey compared to other students across the country.

Co-variation between optimistic bias and third-person perception appears to begin and end with psychological distance. Individual difference variables included in the study design included self-esteem, gender, grade level, content-specific knowledge, and academic achievement (GPA). Findings suggest that only self-esteem was related to optimistic bias among "at-risk" youth, and only grade level was related to third-person perception. The sole media variable (attitudes toward safer-sex messages) appears to be related to third-person perception, but not to optimistic bias. There were no shared predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception.

The combined findings of the present study do not support the assumption that optimistic bias causes third-person perception, although there is a weak association between the two. The two concepts best intersect at health-related messages, with each potentially making unique contributions to message design of campaigns targeted toward "at-risk" youth.

Significance of the Study

This study makes numerous contributions to the existing literatures. First, it provides a context for research representing three groups largely under-represented in both the optimistic bias and third-person perception literatures: minorities, adolescents, and urbanites. Risk statistics provided in the previous sections show that the youth attending the three selected programs (for "at risk youth") in urban New Jersey, provided an excellent setting for this study.

The findings confirm that both optimistic bias and third-person perception are present in the sample, indicating that both concepts are appropriate frames for understanding the sex-risk perception of "at-risk" youth. Next, the study bridges a gap between communication and psychology by testing the relationship between third-person perception and optimistic bias, which has been suggested in the communication literature, yet remained untested. Contrary to the position that optimistic bias *causes* third-person perception (Gunther & Mundy, 1993), the findings suggest that a small inverse relationship exists between the two concepts. However, because the relationship between optimistic bias and third-person perception has not been empirically tested previously, and due to the unique attributes of the sample, the current findings should be interpreted with caution.

The last contribution of the present study is the inclusion of media use and attitudes toward safer-sex messages (the media) as predictors of optimistic bias and third-person perception. The findings indicate that at-risk youth bring pre-existing levels of trust and liking for public service announcements and advertisements, which appear to influence third-person perception. Specifically, negative attitudes toward safer-sex messages increased the self/other distinction concerning perceived influence of health messages. Actual time spent with the media did not appear to influence optimistic bias or third-person perception.

Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations of the study should be addressed. The first three limitations discussed below deal with sampling issues and generalizability. The final two limitations are measurement issues.

The primary strength of the study is also its greatest weakness: the sample. In order to address the neglect of urban, minority "at-risk" youth in previous research, the programs selected for study were rather homogeneous and intentionally differed from existing research. Specifically, the sample was younger and African-American. The importance of conducting research in such a sample has already been discussed. However, the use of a "unique" sample was less appropriate for other purposes of the study: bridging a gap between psychology and communication. Variations in findings reported here may be due to differences between groups, thus would be less generalizable to existing research and to other populations.

The results of this study are based on a convenience sample of students enrolled in programs for "at-risk" youth in urban New Jersey. They are known to differ from the rest of the population they are drawn from in that 80% of the program students typically graduate from high school, compared to the 25% graduation rate of the school system they are drawn from. It is possible that another sample drawn from the larger school system would differ significantly from program students.

Conducting survey research with children presents a unique set of problems in data collection. Inconsistencies among responses were discussed previously, especially in relation to self-reports of risk behaviors. Where inconsistencies emerged, it is not clear whether they were the result of fabrication, lack of concentration, or lack of comprehension.

It has been argued that third-person perception is an artifact of question order, because participants in early studies were asked to assess message effects on others before indicating effects on themselves (Lasorsa, 1992; Tiedge, Silverblatt, Havice, & Rosenfeld, 1991). Like others, the present study addressed this critique by reversing question order. However, it could still be argued that the fixed question order for both messages may have encouraged a response set. The same limitation also applies to the fixed question order in the optimistic bias scale. As stated in previously, it was important not to alter existing measures despite their limitations in order to facilitate comparison of findings from the current study to previous research.

Implications for Message Design

Although not an explicit objective of this study, some implications for improving message design emerge from the findings. Differences noted between the current study and existing research indicate that messages targeted for "at-risk" youth should result from research with the target audience. The relative social undesirability of hazards, and by extension optimistic bias, were both shown to be culturally specific to a target audience. In addition, message design informed by optimistic bias should focus on personal risk to specified hazards. Since experience has been shown to influence optimistic bias, safer sex campaigns need to begin in early adolescence. The finding that optimistic bias increases with grade level reinforces the notion that the best time frame for influencing students' sex-risk perceptions is middle school or earlier.

Directions for Future Research

Additional research needs to focus on minority adolescents in order to confirm the findings from the current study and to better understand students' sex risk perception and risk-taking behaviors. Superior designs would include adolescents and adults and a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The relationship between grade level and perceptual bias needs to be explored further to discover the age when bias emerges, thus the best age for targeting campaigns and/or interventions. In particular, the following research questions should be addressed: How do adolescents differ from adults in optimistic bias and third-person perception? What is the optimum age range for safer-sex campaigns, before perceptual bias emerges? How do adolescents from various cultural backgrounds differ in optimistic bias and third-person perception? Does optimistic bias in youth predict risk taking in late adolescence and adulthood? Do adolescents who differ in degrees of third-person perception disregard health-related messages? Do messages that focus on personal risk reduce optimistic bias, and by extension risk taking?

Although it is unlikely that optimistic bias *causes* third-person perception, further research that includes both concepts may result in a better understanding of sex risk perception in relation to public communication campaigns. Bridging the gap between psychology and communication is the first logical step in the path to understanding.

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Table 1

Zero-Order Correlations Among Optimistic Bias and Individual Difference Variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Optimistic bias	-.26**	-.14	-.10	-.09	-.08	.08
2. Self-esteem	---	.11	-.03	.15	.01	-.11
3. Grade level		---	.05	-.33**	.52**	.10
4. Media attitudes			---	.05	.09	.07
5. GPA				---	-.14	-.03
6. HIV/AIDS knowledge					---	-.06
7. Media use						---

Note. Because optimistic bias is indicated by a negative mean, all signs in row 1 should be reversed for interpretation.

**$p < .01$.

Table 2

Third-person perception: Mean Differences for 4 Levels of Psychological Distance (n = 170)

Source	Best friend	NJ students	USA students
1. Message 1	$-.25_a$	$.10_b$	$.45_c$
2. Message 2	$-.23_a$	$.31_b$	$.52_b$

Note. Subscripts that differ within a row denote means that differ at $p < .05$, according to Bonferroni post hoc analysis.

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations Among Third-person perception, Individual Difference Variables, and Optimistic Bias

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Third-person perception	-.33**	.24**	-.18*	-.16*	-.14	-.02	-.02
2. Media attitudes	---	-.10	.05	.09	-.03	.05	.07
3. Optimistic bias		---	-.14	-.08	-.26**	-.09	.08
4. Grade level			---	.52***	.11	-.33***	-.10
5. HIV/AIDS knowledge				---	.01	-.14	-.06
6. Self-esteem					---	.15	-.11
7. GPA						---	-.03
8. Media use							---

Note. Because optimistic bias is indicated by a negative mean, all signs in column and row 3 should be reversed for interpretation.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 4

Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Optimistic Bias and third-person perception

	Optimistic bias			Third-person perception		
	Adj r^2 = .09 n = 143			Adj r^2 = .15 n = 166		
Predictor	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Self-esteem	-4.20	.02	-.23**	---	---	---
Third-person perception	7.86	.02	.21**	---	---	---
Media attitudes	---	---	---	-.44	.10	-.30***
Optimistic bias	---	---	---	.49	.19	.18**

Note.

**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Min + Comm

Exclusion, Denial, and Resignation:
How African American Girls Read Mainstream Teen Magazines

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ABSTRACT

Exclusion, Denial, and Resignation: How African American Girls Read Mainstream Teen Magazines

'Teen, Seventeen, and *YM,* the best-selling teen magazines, are arguably culturally specific in their execution of major themes, yet enjoy a substantial African American audience. This is a qualitative study of how 26 Black and White readers of teen magazines understand and negotiate African American girls' relative absence from these texts. Black participants' interpretations of teen magazines change with age, but also with girls' growing racial awareness and identification, demonstrating the pertinence of Helms's (1995) model of racial-identity development to the data.

Exclusion, Denial, and Resignation: How African American Girls Read Mainstream Teen Magazines

This research is part of a longitudinal study initiated in 1994 (Duke & Kreshel, 1996) on how adolescent girls interpret the most popular teen magazines: *'Teen, Seventeen, and YM*. These magazines are arguably culturally specific in their execution of major themes, but enjoy a substantial African American audience. What is known is that these teen magazines are seen by girls in one study as consistent in their portrayal of the feminine ideal (Duke & Kreshel, 1996): tall, thin, blue-eyed, blonde, *White*.

The research question that guides this study is how the Black and White readers of teen magazines understand and negotiate African American girls' relative absence from the texts. I describe how Black participants' interpretations of teen magazines change with age, but also with girls' growing racial awareness and identification. I develop the analysis further by demonstrating the pertinence of Helms's (1995) model of racial-identity development to the data. (Participants are described as African American or Black, interchangeably, or White, as these terms were used by participants.)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teen Magazines and Their Readers

Of the 14 million girls between the ages of 12 and 19 in the United States, it is estimated that over half read *Seventeen*, the best-selling teen magazine. Although the majority of readers of the three largest teen magazines, *Seventeen*, *'Teen*, and *YM*, are White, the magazines have a significant audience among girls of color: *Seventeen* reaches 44% of "ethnic females 12-19" (defined as African American, "other" race, or from a Spanish-speaking household); *'Teen* and *YM* each reach 34% of these same girls. African American girls ages 12-19 make up the single largest non-White group of readers -- they comprise, on average, about 12% of the readership for each of the three major teen titles. The 1997 MRI TwelvePlus notes that although only 12% of people over the age of 12 identify themselves as Black, 16% of *Seventeen*'s readers do -- meaning that magazine draws a greater percentage of African American readers than are represented in the population. The median age of readers of teen magazines is 15-16; the median household income is between $39,000 and $43,000 annually (Source for all: 1997 MRI Teenmark).

The content of *Seventeen*, *'Teen*, and *YM* is virtually indistinguishable from one magazine to the next (Evans, Rutberg, Sather, & Turner, 1991). Sixty percent of the magazines' copy was devoted to "beauty, fashion, cooking, and decorating" in each of the years 1961, 1972, and 1985 (Pierce, 1990, p. 491).

Content analyses of mainstream magazines, including but not exclusively fashion magazines, show that African Americans have had gradually increasing representation in the text and advertisements (Bowen & Schmid, 1997; Stevenson & Stevenson, 1988; Zinkhan, Qualls, & Biswas, 1990), but the representation of Latinos and Asians remains low and has shown no signs of strengthening over the past few years (Bowen & Schmid, 1997). However, even the Black representation in mainstream magazines lags behind the percentage of Blacks in the population, and Black *women* continue to be among the most underrepresented groups on television, only slightly more visible than Asians and Hispanics (Atkin, 1991).

African Americans are most often portrayed in the media as athletes or performers, as part of a group that is largely White, and in a professional rather than social context (Bowen & Schmid, 1997). In advertisements, African American women are most frequently portrayed as performers or as mother/domestic (Shepherd, 1980). In general, African Americans with lighter skin and more European American features have been featured more prominently in magazine advertising (Keenan, 1996), even in traditionally Black magazines like *Ebony*. For example, Leslie's (1995) content analysis of that publication found that, except for a period during the 1960s when darker models were in vogue, lighter-skinned African American models have been increasingly prevalent into the 1980s. This prevalence may not be due solely to White producers presenting a "whitified" image of Black America (Gitlin, 1983). In her interviews with 51 Black girls on what constituted beauty, Leeds (1994) found that "skin-color prejudice among African Americans continues, and this engenders divisions and resentment" (p. 150). In her study, girls expressed personal appreciation of darker skin, yet maintained that their peers deemed lighter skin more desirable. African American girls decried the use of models who were nowhere near as dark as most Black women they knew, but recognized the lighter skin tone was fashionable, even among Blacks.

Among the explanations offered most often for scant minority representation in mainstream magazines and the use of minority models who closely mimic the European American ideal are marketers' fears that the larger contingent of White consumers may not identify with and therefore may not buy products represented by people of color (Gitlin, 1983). Also, marketers may believe they more effectively reach minority markets by placing advertising in media vehicles specifically intended for minorities (Bowen & Schmid, 1997). Critical theorists argue that the real issue at stake is the continued control and subordination of Blacks, who are positioned through media texts and images as a group responsible for and deserving of their relative social powerlessness (Bourne, 1990; Ukadike, 1990).

If teen magazines imply any girl can be beautiful with their help, what does the relative absence of Black girls say -- that the mediated standard of beauty does not apply to them? How do African American girls negotiate those messages?

The African American Adolescent Female

Because of researchers' focus on White youth, the unique adolescent experience of African American girls has seldom been addressed (Smith, 1982). "The net result has been...that little attention has been given to either how a Black girl perceives herself as a female or how she is perceived by others as a female" (p. 262). In fact, race has profound implications for studies of what it means to be an American female; it is one of the most important indicators of girls' self-image. Prendergast, Zdep, and Sepulveda (1974) found that Black girls rated themselves consistently higher than White girls did on several dimensions of self-esteem (e.g., being good looking, being athletically adept). These results have been supported by later studies, which have found that African American girls rate their overall attractiveness much higher than White girls do (Parker, Nichter, Nichter, & Vuckovic, 1995). Smith (1982) noted, "...Despite the evidence that Black girls and women are faced with the prospects of being devalued by both Black and the general White society in favor of White women, Black females have been able to maintain a positive sense of self against what appear to be overwhelming odds" (p. 281). One explanation for African American girls' more positive self-esteem was offered by Sterling (1975), who theorized that Black teens develop racial- and self-identities simultaneously -- negative self-assessments were described by teens as situational (e.g., performance in a White context) rather than personal.

The average age of menarche for all girls has fallen dramatically over the past 150 years, from age 16 to age 12 today. Although all American girls are experiencing puberty at earlier ages, three times as many Black girls as White show signs of puberty at age eight (Nightingale & Wolverton, 1993, p. 16). Additionally, middle-class adolescence, typically described as occurring between the ages of 12 and the early twenties, ends much sooner for a large number of lower income Black females -- at about age 18 -- because economic factors necessitate greater family responsibility at a younger age. However, middle-class girls of both races are said to enjoy a similar, extended period of adolescence, relatively free of the responsibilities borne by girls in earlier times, or by contemporaries in less fortunate circumstances.

Class mitigates girls' experience of race in other important ways, as well. As more African Americans move into the middle and upper classes, it has been argued that their tendency is to distance themselves from the less prosperous Black majority (Wilson, 1980). Kilson (1983) describes a Black middle class in a kind of racial purgatory, finding affinity with neither Whites nor Blacks. In a replication of Clark and Clark's (1947) classic doll study, detailed in the following section, Porter (1971) found class had a potent effect on children's doll choices, with middle-class African American children more likely to choose a White doll than lower income Black children, who were far more likely to choose a brown doll. Likewise, White middle-class children were more likely to choose a brown doll than were White lower income children. The conclusions of this study were supported by Brand, Ruiz, and Padilla's (1974) overview of the literature, in which they found evidence that middle-class children identified less with their ethnicity than did children with lower family incomes.

Clark & Clark (1947) was the first study to address the pervasiveness of European American standards of appearance -- children of color were said to suffer from "self-hatred" as a result of their racial or ethnic difference from the majority. African Americans were believed to suffer chronic low self-esteem as a result of their daily confrontations with racism that consistently positioned them outside and below the norm (Guterman, 1972). Bell-Scott and McKenry (1986) have contended that such thinking about African Americans pervades the literature, even though the Black identity and civil rights projects of the 1960s were successful in reclaiming "Black as beautiful" for a large number of Black Americans. The persistence of such "self-hatred" thinking was fueled, Bell-Scott and McKenry (1986) have argued, by scholars who failed to factor socioeconomic class into their studies across race, frequently comparing lower income Blacks to middle-class Whites. Such studies frequently found that Whites had higher self-esteem than Blacks; however, when the data were controlled for class, higher self-esteem was found to be a function of the greater financial prosperity of White participants. In fact, various studies have shown an increase in Black self-esteem over the years. Researchers have found that Black girls exhibit greater self-esteem than

White girls on most dimensions being measured, in particular, appearance (Prendergast, Zdep, & Sepulveda, 1974; Parker, Nichter, Nichter, & Vuckovic, 1995). Numerous contemporary replications of the original Clark and Clark (1947) doll study showed African American youths no longer preferred White dolls to dolls of color (Fine & Bowers, 1984; Greene, 1980; Hraba & Grant, 1970), although other studies have offered conflicting results (Asher & Allen, 1969; Gitter, Mostosky, & Satow, 1972).

Bell-Scott and McKenry (1986) have argued that African Americans do not turn to the larger society to meet their esteem needs. Rather, it is the African American family and community that give their youth the emotional sustenance needed to maintain esteem. The role of families -- in particular, mothers -- in nurturing the Black adolescent female's self-esteem is evident in the literature. Janie Ward, an African American scholar who has worked with psychologist Carol Gilligan as a member of the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development, has said, "In healthy Black families, children are helped to develop the ability to repudiate outside notions" (Ward, 1994).

In extensive interviews with African American girls, Leeds (1994) suggested that girls' and women's magazines might be less important to them in defining and reinforcing beauty standards than were "personal memories, the appearance of favorite video stars, what they had heard their older brothers say, the opinions of peers and lectures from their mothers" (p. 149). In a theme that recurs throughout the literature on how Black girls negotiate demands of all-pervasive, White-dominated fashion and beauty texts, a supportive minority culture successfully mitigates the more damaging messages of the society at large. Young African American female respondents "felt that they should value their natural appearance, a lesson they have been taught by their mothers" (Leeds, 1994, p. 152).

Racial identity theory and the culturally situated, adolescent media audience

Arnett, Larson, and Offer (1995) have explicated five primary ways adolescents use the media: for entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification (p. 521). The researchers have argued that media are particularly important in adolescent projects of socialization and gender role identity development for both sexes. Although Arnett et al. are clear in outlining how their model is appropriate to study of Western children at different developmental stages of self-identity, they do not suggest how race -- as it mitigates socialization -- is addressed by the model.

Helms posits a five-stage process of racial identity development through which members of racially oppressed groups progress: Pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and integrative awareness. Although not specifically formulated to address Black females, Helms's model provides a context in which to consider African American adolescents' responses to popular media.

In the pre-encounter stage, girls have not engaged in significant racial-identity work. Acknowledgement of race and racial differences is suppressed or at least, unexamined -- girls may engage in "idealization of the dominant White world view" (Helms, 1995, p. 20). In the second stage, encounter, girls might be expected to express ambivalence toward their racial group and their membership in it, until some event, usually in adolescence, triggers an exploration of the meaning of racial identity and a girl's relationship to it (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992, p. 150). In the immersion/emersion stage, girls engage mentally and emotionally in their identity work -- to celebrate "Blackness," usually in opposition to Whites. Girls "immerse" themselves in a Black world, and judge other Blacks on how "authentically" African American they are, based on their conformity to stereotypic Black characteristics. "Emersion" involves the gradual development of a unique Black identity. In the next stage, internalization, a girl's racial identity becomes solidified and blended with her personal identity -- she finds security in her racial group membership and becomes committed to it. Finally, in the stage of integrative awareness, girls "value their own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups" (Helms, 1995, p. 186). Phinney and Chavira (in press) have demonstrated that significant progress along the racial identity continuum occurs between the ages of 16 and 19.

Racial identity theory offered profound insights on the ways Black girls in this study accepted, negotiated, disregarded, or overlooked content regarding relationships, beauty, fashion, and other modes of self-presentation. Throughout this article, I offer a refinement of Arnett, Larson, and Offer's (1995) model of adolescent media use by demonstrating how an individual's stage of racial identity development may significantly influence how media are used and interpreted.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This research employs a feminist, qualitative method that is guided by three primary principles (Edwards, 1990):

1. Women's lives need to be addressed in their own terms.

2. Feminist research should not be on women, but for women.

3. Feminist methodology involves putting the researcher into the processes of production and interpreting results; one way I do this by writing in the first person and "putting the [myself] squarely in the scene" (Wolcott, 1990, p. 47).

In keeping with feminist principles that value the multiple interpretations individual females can bring to a text, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews allow for expression of "resistive elements informing female cultural practices" (Schwichtenberg, 1992). Presentation of participants' accounts gives the neglected voices, interpretations, and cultural truths of girls and women center stage.

Interpretive data can never be said to describe an objective reality outside each participant's experience of it, as it is communicated to and interpreted through the researcher. Although my interpretations have been verified by my participants, certain aspects of the analysis such as the precise language of themes and ways of linking certain data, result from my own socially situated frames of reference. Therefore, the oriented perspective presented in my analysis is but one in what should be a wide array; other researchers working with similar subjects would no doubt enrich the description begun here.

Researching Across Difference

Researchers subscribing to standpoint epistemology question whether a White researcher such as I should interview Black participants, given our different historical and cultural backgrounds (Collins, 1991). However, Black girls make up a substantial part of the audience for teen magazines, and my research efforts would be insufficient if I did not address them. I believed the richness of the data would be compromised if I relied on the observations of a second-party about girls' dress, comportment, mannerisms, room contexts, family interactions, and the like. In interpretive, qualitative approaches such as the one used in this study, the researcher serves as the instrument of data collection and analysis. Therefore, I decided to undertake my own interviews, with some built-in checks on my interpretations. First, as in all my qualitative efforts, I returned to girls with my interpretations post-interview for verification of my work by the participants, that is, through member checks. Two young African American university students heard about my work and volunteered to be my research assistants. We decided that as a check on the validity of cross-race interviewing, one of these assistants would conduct a focus group with Black participants to see how differently girls might express themselves with a same-race moderator.

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Selection of Participants

This paper is part of a larger, longitudinal study that traces the magazine interpretations of girls as they age from early to late adolescence. The data discussed in this paper is drawn from a group of 16 African American girls -- eight in early adolescence, ages 12-14, and eight who are 17 and 18, and ten White girls, ages 16-18. Participants are from middle-class suburbs of Atlanta, Savannah, and Chicago and were chosen via the snowball method after I met a core group of girls through acquaintances. A description of all the participants and the interview contexts are available in the full text of this study.

Interview Format

After agreeing to participate in this study, girls were provided with money to purchase the teen magazine of their choice, which they were asked to read before their scheduled interviews. The teen magazine of a girl's choice was used as a stimulus device during the interview, a technique called auto-driving. Auto-driving requires that participants be provided with photographs, music, text, or video as prompts for their interpretations (McCracken, 1988, p. 36). Through the use of this technique, girls were able to provide more vivid interpretations of the text and often used the magazine to strengthen descriptions of their reading experiences.

Interviews began with a grand tour question (Crabtree & Miller 1992, p. 81), "Tell me, and show me, how you read this magazine." This allowed the participant to talk at length, with the magazine serving as a prompt. Although I used the following interview guide to begin my initial exchanges with participants, I allowed the conversation to flow naturally and referred to the guide only to ensure I had covered all the issues I had intended.

As a check on my cross-race interviews with Black girls, several of these girls participated in a focus group lead by an African American moderator, a 21-year-old female college student. Six of eight girls in the older African American group agreed to participate, five of those six actually attended. Girls were provided with dinner in return for their participation in the focus group.

Questions from individual interviews were rephrased and asked again for verification. We also used the focus group as an opportunity for feedback on results from a partial, preliminary analysis and to clarify points girls made during their individual interviews

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Analysis

After transcribing tapes of participant interviews, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) method of categorizing data to establish emergent themes and organizing constructs. Transcripts were examined for instances of language, descriptions of content, particular uses of text, and units of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 344) to be grouped into categories (e.g., identity formation, self-expression through artifice). Using my variation of Lincoln and Guba's representation (p. 347) of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), units were examined individually and sorted into sets that were subsequently labeled with the abstract functions that unified them. Next, I looked at function categories to see if they contained substantially more units from girls of one racial group. All data were categorized or judged to be irrelevant or so atypical as to not be thematically viable. Analysis was complete when categories were saturated with compelling data instances, emergent patterns and regularities were identified, and I determined that additional analysis would not contribute significantly to the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 350).

FINDINGS

Race Matters: Reading in Black and White

> Kenya, 13, Black (on teen magazine fashions): I don't know anybody who would wear this.
> Interviewer: How about the makeup?...
> Kenya: I don't wear makeup.
> Interviewer: Okay. And how about the shampoo and stuff like that?
> Kenya: Un uh. 'Cause...my beautician washes my hair.
> Interviewer: ...How about information on guys?
> Kenya: ...I can't connect with it. ...They...talk about petty stuff. ...Like they don't want to go to parties because they can't dance...
> Interviewer: ...And your friends have different problems with guys?
> Kenya: Yes. Like...more serious stuff.

The big three teen magazines, *'Teen*, *Seventeen*, and *YM*, position themselves in the market as magazines for "everygirl" -- regardless of race. But Black girls seemed to understand that in this category, every girl was White -- White models, White products, White music, a White perspective. Mainstream teen magazines provide tangible evidence of Willis's (1992) observation that, "...in a sexist society, it's impossible to take one's femaleness for granted; in a racist society, Whiteness is simply generic humanness, entirely unremarkable" (p. 101). White dominance is naturalized, as though it were a nonissue.

Black girls in this study have grown accustomed to magazines ignoring their concerns, but they still purchase them. They have few other choices; the big three have long been the only magazines available if a girl was interested in age-appropriate, high-quality fashion texts. Older Black girls' relationship with mainstream fashion and beauty magazines has consistently been unsatisfying:

> Tonya, 17, Black (from focus group): I think (*Seventeen*) is mainly for White girls. Most of this stuff, I couldn't relate to...they would handle themselves totally different. Like, it would be such a big deal to them over something so easy to solve...It's like, "I can't do anything, 'cause he might think I'm a fat, ugly"...But to me, it's like mountains out of molehills.

White girls wanted to believe that the magazines they read were equitable in their treatment of Black girls, regardless of evidence to the contrary. When one White girl could find few pictures of Black girls in her magazine, she declared repeatedly that this issue was not representative of the usual standards of the magazine. Although most White girls pointed out the dearth of Black images in their magazines, they did not think this was the result of a conscious effort on the magazine's part:

> Karen, 17, White: There weren't any Black girls in there, I don't think.
> ...I think Naomi Campbell's in there...She's really pretty.
> Interviewer: She's the only one you can think of as far as Black representation...?
> Karen: Yeah. I mean, you can never tell who writes in these things, because they only have initials. And you can't tell by initials what color (the writers) are. ...People that...put it together don't even know. ...So it's not like they're discriminating on purpose.

Before their participation in this study, most White girls had never considered the question of Black representation in teen magazines. At least one girl was stunned by the content of magazines she'd read for years -- she never questioned whether the content addressed anyone's concerns other than her own:

> Zena, 17, White (flipping back through her magazine to examine its content): They don't address Black girls at all. I guess Black girls should have the same things. Maybe the girls who wrote in were Black. It doesn't really say -- who sent their problems in. There's like one Black guy...You don't even realize it.

She finally found what she thought *might* be pictures of Black girls, but she was unclear what ethnicity they represented -- they were what one older Black girl called, "borderline Black women," if they were Black at all. Another girl observed that the few Black models in the magazines were "not the typical black girls that I see daily" because their skin was light and their hair was long: "You don't see pictures of Black girls in this magazine with weaves and stuff. Like what I see every day in Savannah." Black and White girls agreed that more realistic representation of *all* girls was overdue.

On examination of their magazines, White girls admitted that, indeed, they should have more images of girls of color, but this is the only respect in which White girls see that the magazines show bias. Older black girls, however, detected bias in almost every aspect of the text: the images, the products

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featured, the behaviors portrayed, the topics covered – the magazines ignore or overlook their most fundamental concerns and interests as African Americans:

> Tonya, 17, Black: And I was looking at (the calendar page) because...I wanted to see if they mentioned anything about...African American History Month. And it didn't. So, I flipped on.
> Interviewer: Okay. Now why were you looking for that?
> Tonya: Well, because it's February and they have this calendar of things that happened this month...I felt that...they're limiting their scope...just including silly little things and not things that are relevant to the outside world. Just dumb stuff like about (teen idol).

White girls seemed to have no idea of what kind of editorial content might appeal to Black girls, other than that already standard in the magazine. When asked what content she might include in a magazine just for Black girls, Zena, a White girl, seemed mystified:

> Zena: I don't know what I could possibly do. I should know this. I'd put more pictures of Black women to show them that they're important, too. To show them it's not just a White person's world. …These little pictures, they're all White…it's like -- there's no credit to them at all. But I don't know what it possibly could say. They're trying to address everybody.

Based on interviews with the Black girls in this study, mainstream teen magazine content is not directed to anybody, but to a specific group with needs and concerns different from those of Black girls. Joanna, a White girl, suggested an article on eating disorders was one that would interest girls of any race; however, Black girls suffer a relatively small percentage of the eating disorders in this country -- the phenomena generally occur within the White, middle- and upper-class female population. And, to Karen's point that "you never can tell who writes these things," another girl observed the race of unpictured authors of stories and letters is usually assumed by readers to be White because the magazine is so rife with pictures of White people.

One way girls of both races understood and explained inequitable treatment of the races in their favorite magazines was market demand: the magazines were not demonstrating bias, they were simply satisfying the requirements of consumers:

> Interviewer: ...When you're older, what kind of magazines will you read?
> Karen, 17, White: *People.* Because my mom does.
> Interviewer: Do they treat race differently than this magazine or is it the same?
> Karen: *People*'s a good gossip magazine. So, I guess it's just like if Black people are gossip, then *People* are going to talk about them. If White people are gossip, then they'll talk about them.
>
> Shawn, 17, Black (from focus group): (The magazine) would be better if they had more variety. But then again, they're trying to see what sells better, so -- Maybe putting that one Black person in will sell more.

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Although Black girls share some wants and needs with White girls, perspectives and problems unique to African Americans were simply not addressed. Is there a set of characteristics and interests common to people of one race and not another? Who should determine what those characteristics and interests are, and how they should be addressed? Many older Black girls said racial and cultural differences *should* be addressed, according girls of color and their perspectives a greater presence in mainstream teen magazines. White girls felt more comfortable showing difference than talking about it; they said that to discuss aspects of difference beyond appearance was not something that was often done and perhaps was not even relevant. One White 17-year-old noted, "You can't say 'A White guy is like this and a Black guy is like that.' I don't think they'd be able to like publish it."

The paradox is that to address difference, in many girls' minds, is tantamount to prejudice; all people should be treated the same. The younger Black girls, especially, felt uncomfortable drawing distinctions between themselves and White girls -- Faith could not even verbally distinguish race in this exchange:

> Faith, 14, Black: (My ideal magazine would have) like how (Black girls) live their lives and stuff, compared to the other ones.
> Interviewer: Compared to what?
> Faith: How the other girls.
> Interviewer: What other girls?
> Faith: White girls.
> Interviewer: Okay. Is it hard for you to say?
> Faith: Well, I don't like saying it; I'm not prejudiced and I don't like saying 'White girls.'

Black girls believed that their perspective might be better represented through the text if people of color were better integrated throughout the production process. In the focus group, one girl told the story of *Seventeen* coming to her school to do a "School Zone" feature. She said they arrived with White makeup artists to apply cosmetics to the kids who would be featured. The White kids looked great, she said, but the Black kids came out looking ashy. Every girl at the table laughed. Black girls believed the magazines would do a better job by employing more people of color, such as models, makeup artists, stylists, and writers, and allowing them to represent race authentically.

From the focus group:

> Voice #1. Seems like if there is a Black girl in there, she's like African looking or something -- short hair...
> Voice #2. Or no hair.
> Voice #3. Or they mess up her hair.

> Voice #4. Or the way they do makeovers.
> Voice #5. They put bright red lipstick on her.
> Voice #6. That makes me mad -- They make her look (bad).
> Voice #7. They talking about "We coated her hair with highlights"
> Voice #8. Or they give her a little bun.
> Voice #9. "We didn't know what to do with (her hair), so we put it back."
> Voice #10. But they need to say, "OK, we're got a Black makeover to do
> -- let's go get a Black makeup artist...who's worked on different colored faces."

> Nicole, 17, Black: I would try to have like more Black writers just because they would have a better feel for what to say and how to say it...And I'm not saying, "Black people are like this -- I'm Black and I know"...But they're not going to have to go, "Oh, wait a minute, what are Black people like again?" ...We have this thing about America being one big melting pot, but it's not. It's like big chunks...some things just aren't going to fizzle out. And we're not going to be all bland.

In sum, there is an bias in the major teen magazines that is invisible to most White girls and many younger Black girls, but is nonetheless quite apparent to the more racially identified Black girls, usually the *older* black girls. This bias is not simply reflected in the magazines' use of fewer black models, but in the editorial and advertising text as well.

Although older White girls recognized relatively few models of color in teen magazines, they argued that somehow this was less important than that the text was appropriate for all girls. Many White girls make emphatic statements that the visual inequity between girls of color and White girls was not an indication of the magazines' prejudice. Rather, the current dearth of these images was attributed to demands of the market ("Black girls don't read these magazines) and oversight ("There are usually a lot more picture of Black girls – this is not a good issue"). White girls had no conception of how the text might change to reflect more closely the needs and concerns of Black girls; they were unaware that the world created in teen magazines was seen by older Black girls as a White one. The inclusion of more pictures of people of color would make the magazines' treatment of all girls equal in White girls' minds.

Younger Black girls, too, were generally less aware of the bias older Black girls detected; this may be due to their greater desire to fit in to the dominant picture and be addressed as a teen girl rather than a Black teen girl, as predicted by racial identity theory. Older Black girls were more interested in being recognized as African Americans. Such recognition would go beyond a superficial inclusion of more photos of people of color; girls also noted the absence of text that addressed their unique experiences, perspectives, and needs as Black people.

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One White girl noted the importance of including images of Black women to show Black girls "it's not just a White person's world." But presently, that is exactly the message older Black girls are getting from teen magazines:

> Nicole, 17, Black (from focus group): Some stuff is universal. But then there's the makeup and stuff you can't relate to, and it's like, you know, we live in a White world. …I try not to think about stuff like that, but basically, yeah, it is.

In the following section, I discuss in greater detail the mechanisms by which Black girls who read teen magazines reason through or accept their symbolic annihilation by the publications.

Two Approaches to Exclusion: Denial and Resignation

> All the projections of the fashion-beauty complex have this in common. They are images of what I am not (Bartky, 1990, p. 40).

In this reference, Bartky speaks to the mindset of the "average" American woman. However, the statement becomes most literal in its evocation of the relationship between girls of color and mainstream fashion and beauty texts. Whether they are conscious of it, girls see that on every layout on every page race *does* matter, because it is a defining feature of the dominant image. Teen magazines seem to say Black girls are insufficient or unsuitable subjects for individual portraits; girls say African American models are usually seen in combination with White girls and boys, just one of the gang.

Whereas White girls come to the text with various motivations to compare themselves to the models, in many ways, Black girls have little motivation to do so. They find Black women and girls sparsely represented in the texts, and the representation that exists is viewed as atypical of the African American audience –a criticism that many White girls make about the white models. Black girls had a number of ways of explaining their absence from the pages of teen magazines, but most often, they seemed to understand that the image of the White girls is meant to be seen as generic for all girls.

Black girls have become accustomed to getting less than their due in the fashion/beauty texts. Girls said repeatedly that greater representation in the pages of their favorite magazines was something they tried not to think about or that they ignored. African American girls felt powerless to change how they have always been misrepresented or underrepresented in the media. Although most of the African American girls noted the relative dearth of Black models in the magazines, it was consistently reported as an established fact and not as an issue to be changed.

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> Interviewer: Do you think they use enough Black girls in the magazine?
> Kim, 13: It doesn't make a difference to me.
> Interviewer: ...Would you like to see more girls like you in the magazine?
> Kim: I don't care. I just like the clothes.

> Andi, 17: They have an occasional Black picture, but they just choose not to focus on Black people. ...It may not be intentional. It may be intentional. But it really doesn't matter, because it's not there.

Girls who were more heavily invested in the magazines, who had a higher overall impression of the magazines and their value to them, for example, as tools in cultivating male relationships, had a greater tendency to avoid confronting the issue of bias. Many Black girls said, despite how it might appear, *there must be a good reason for the relative absence of women and girls of color from the texts*: "There aren't that many Black people that like to model"; "Black models (were) probably busy doing something else"; "I guess they don't think many Black people would pick it up and read it." African American girls gave reasons that made the relative absence of Blacks from teen magazines seem justified, or Black people's *choice*:

> Shelly, 17 (from focus group): I don't have a problem with it because magazines like *Jet* and *Ebony*, they don't have any White people in it.

> Lilly, 13: There's some girls that's Black that don't like to be in it (magazine) and some girls that's beautiful that don't use their talents to be in stuff when they have every opportunity. So, first come, first serve.

How might my being a White interviewer have encouraged these kinds of readings from the girls? Note that it was in the focus group moderated by a young African American woman that Shelly made her remark. Kira, who was most critical of *Seventeen* in both the individual interview and focus group, also made the comment in the focus group that its White orientation did not make *Seventeen* a bad magazine. In the focus group, girls communicated much the same points they made in the individual interviews, but agreement and encouragement among participants amplified these points.

In the following section, Black girls identify a number of ways the best-selling teen magazines display cultural bias – in addition to the obvious overuse of White and underuse of ethnic models. Girls also address the teen magazines targeted specifically to African Americans. Although a few African American girls spoke highly of these publications, most preferred mainstream teen magazines.

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Left out of the Conversation: Conventions of Exclusion. The Desire for Inclusion

> Interviewer: Does the magazine say anything about Black people?
> Andi, 17, Black: No.
> Interviewer: Does it say anything about White people?
> Andi: Oh yeah. That's what this whole magazine is about.

Black girls were excluded from the text in a number of ways -- looking past a bevy of White models to the text, Black girls still failed to see representation of their lives or the lives of the majority of Black people. Even girls whose lives were comfortably middle-class typified as White the affluent lifestyles portrayed in fashion/beauty magazines:

> Nicole, 17: ...Black people in general, they don't buy Gucci pants and that sort of stuff. They buy what's affordable...Usually I don't think about it, but some stuff -- by the tone or whatever -- you may think about it. Like "I don't buy that," or "I don't know anybody that buys that." ...I'm sure like Oprah probably is like that ... but not like the average Black woman.

Black girls saw advertised products and ways of interrelating as race-specific. Even characters in a story were ascribed a race based on cultural clues: one girl said she knew a story was about a White women because it was about adoption and she did not know many Black people who adopt babies. The same girl noted that certain clothing brands mentioned in the text were White brands. Black girls' response to exclusion was to simply continue reading until they found material to which they *could* relate.

For comparison, I brought a copy of an all-Black teen magazine, *Sisters in Style*, to my interviews. While some of the Black girls responded favorably to the publication, especially to the boys it featured, an equal number rated the magazine negatively or said it was not for them. Two favorable evaluations came from girls whose mother described them as "very Black identified." Kira and Kenya's mother described her household as Africentric and said she made a special effort to acquaint her daughters with publications and books that celebrated Black womanhood. They were particularly favorable to the *Sisters in Style;* Kira's comments were nearly identical to her sister's:

> Kenya, 13 (on a *Sisters In Style* article featuring rapper Tupac Shukar and singer Janet Jackson): I wanted to read the article 'cause it's *real.*
> Interviewer: So, do you like this magazine better than *Seventeen*?
> Kenya: Yes. Because I relate to the stuff. And I know these people.

Like Kira and Kenya, Chris, 13, loves *Sisters In Style* because "it has more people I'm familiar with." She smiled and pointed excitedly at each new star she recognized, celebrities that are known to her and her friends by singular names: Janet, Puffy, Aliyah, Brandy, Tupac. *Sisters In Style* had more stylish

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clothes, according to Chris, and they were presented effectively: not artfully cropped, but straight on, head to toe, "so you can see what they're wearing." Whereas with *'Teen*, she talked at length about the articles she read, *with Sister In Style*, it was the pictures that drew her attention

Kim, 13, looked through *Sisters In Style* for exactly the same information she sought in *'Teen*: fashion, horoscopes and quizzes. She still was not interested in the articles. If she had to choose between the two magazines, she says she would probably read *'Teen*, because *Sisters In Style* profiled rappers of whom her mother disapproved. The age-appropriateness of the material in *Sisters in Style* was a special concern to several of the younger girls.

Older girls took issue with what they saw as the brevity of text in *Sisters In Style*. Tonya, 17, who defined herself as a reader, is unimpressed by the magazine. "At least with *Seventeen*...you go into a little depth." *Sisters In Style*, she says, "is a lot of pictures, very little words." At the postinterview focus group, even Kira, 17, who initially favored the all-Black publication, questions its lack of content: "I need more than pretty pictures of Usher. At least, *Seventeen*, you've got a variety of things you can read about. I wouldn't spend my money for some pictures and maybe two articles." Nicole, 17, also dislikes the publication's "paper pages" (her term for uncoated paper stock that makes for poor photographic reproduction). She also objected to the magazine's idealization of young Black girls lacking the sophistication she exemplified and sought in magazine images:

> Nicole, 17: The little Black teenagers they have in there just look cheesy... I'M not like that!...They're the little Black girls with the braids and little funky haircuts...Or they're still in the baggy pants...It's like you look at that and think, "Hmm, I'm a young Black teenage person and that's how I'm supposed to look." And you don't think about what *you* like anymore. It's based on what you see. And...I don't want to be like that.

Most African American girls in this study were generally dissatisfied with being segregated into a niche magazine audience. Over and over, Black girls stressed their desire for greater inclusion in the well-produced, widely available teen magazines read by the majority of teen girls.

> Nicole, 17, Black: I know magazines that are (race-specific) and I choose not to read them...Like *Essence*...I want to know about the *world*, you know? I don't want to know about me and all my other cultural same people. I already know that. ...It's time to be more diverse and well-rounded because you can't live in a little perfect brown world.

But they also expressed a desire to include more people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds in mainstream publications. When asked what they might include if they edited a magazine just for Black girls, African American participants frequently rejected the notion that their magazine should serve an exclusive target:

> Melissa, 13: I wouldn't make a magazine just for Black girls...It would have an equal amount of Black and White people...All different kinds of colors...Asian guys and Black guys and White guys.

To achieve fairer representation, Black girls say magazines need to consider not only the color of the models they use, but also the editorial content. The Black girls in this study want greater diversity in the types of beauty products teen magazines feature, the images of success they portray, and the breadth of cultural experience they address.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The most popular mainstream magazines targeted to teens, such as *Seventeen*, *'Teen*, and *YM*, claim to be for girls of all races, though they are generally seen as having a distinct orientation to European American girls. White girls and younger African American girls typically noticed only the rarity of African American models; older African American girls were more discerning. To them, mainstream teen magazines' European American bias was evident in the vast majority of images portrayed, the standards of beauty implicit in those images, the types of products advertised in the publication, the grooming and relationship advice offered, and, to some degree, the coverage of specific types of music.

As regular readers of mainstream teen magazines, African American girls in this study had garnered detailed information about the beauty culture of European American girls -- about what the magazine said were the particular interests and concerns of the typical European American female. Due in part to their exposure to White-oriented teen magazines, African American girls were explicit and opinionated about White girls' orientation to beauty and romance; White girls made no such value statements about African American girls. Because White girls lack exposure to a comparable source of information about African American girls, they were generally unclear about what African American girls would desire in a fashion and beauty publication.

Most European American girls claimed mainstream teen magazines were appropriate for girls of any race, regardless of the race and ethnicity of the models portrayed, because the content was universally appealing. Although they acknowledged the magazines did not often feature beauty regimens or products appropriate for girls of color, they assumed information about romance, relationships, health, and social issues were germane to all teens.

Younger Black girls were generally unwilling to acknowledge any difference in the way the magazines treated girls of different racial groups, and were likely to explain Black underrepresentation in mainstream teen magazines as due to Black models' unavailability or disinterest. The reasons they offered were many, but never included racism. Although older African American girls were also more likely to emphasize that their interests and concerns as African Americans were ignored or glossed over by the magazines, they said they were accustomed to such treatment and were likely to note "that's the way it is."

The teen magazine has been said to be a potent force in the socialization of girls because it specifically speaks to issues critical to girls' identity development, at precisely the time when girls are searching for outside confirmation of their identities; also, the magazine format lends itself to intense study and review of gendered images and text. However, adolescence is a social construct, and experience of this period of life is highly variable according to girls' different cultural backgrounds and stage of identity development (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). To understand how and why girls read, we must first understand the socially situated positions from which they read.

Helms's (1995) racial identity model provided important insights into Black girls' responses to particular images and issues in teen magazines. Younger African American girls (ages 13 and 14) who participated in my dissertation research tended to read in a "pre-encounter" mode, that is, they did not consciously engage the text with as strong a racial orientation as older girls (ages 17 and 18). They did not seem conscious of the racial bias older African American girls said was inherent in the material. Younger Black girls tended disavow any knowledge of racial differences in people. For them, difference was bad; everyone should not only be treated the same -- everyone *was* the same. Older Black girls were more likely to engage the text from more evolved stages of racial identity development; girls in the encounter stage were wondering aloud what it meant to be Black and were soliciting input from other girls. Girls in immersion/emersion stage would self-identify positively and in opposition to "White" standards; e.g., several girls denigrated the overemphasis they believed White girls and teen magazines put on male/female relationships, and declared that Black girls were too sensible to act similarly. Girls in the internalization and integrative awareness stages were clearly Black identified, and easily perceived the teen magazines they read as targeting White girls -- however, they were able to take what was useful from the text nonetheless. As one girl pointed out, "Just because it's a White magazine doesn't necessarily make it a bad magazine." Girls in the integrative awareness stage were able to argue that it was not just African Americans who were being given short shrift by the magazines, that in fact, all minorities were.

To date, the most prevalent images of African-American women and girls in mainstream teen magazines closely approximate White standards of attractiveness. On that basis, they are easily dismissed by most African American girls in this study. Black girls recognized the magazines were unable to guide them to ways of looking and behaving that are valued in their families and cultural communities. Instead of translating their relative exclusion from the major teen magazines into negative self-assessments, Black girls generally viewed the magazines as biased and largely irrelevant to their ideas about beauty, though enjoyable for other reasons. However, it does appear that *older* African American girls' interpretations were more culturally aligned with those of the African American community writ large --the culture derives its power not only from the values and ideas communicated to girls, but also from girls' *experience* in the culture. With age, girls grow in their experience of their culture and solidify their racial identity.

However, African American girls were clear about their desire to see more of themselves in mainstream teen magazines. Black girls do not wish to be bystanders to the mass-mediated fashion parade; nor did most of the Black girls in this study want separate but equal publications "just for them." Rather, *they yearn for inclusion and recognition from the teen magazines they already know and read*. They realize that such magazines would need to change to address more fully the issues important to them.

In this study, it was easier for African American girls to opt out of negative self-comparisons to magazine models, given that girls seldom saw their racial equivalents represented in teen magazines. Black girls had the additional advantage of a cultural background that embraces a broader definition of feminine attractiveness than is typically featured in such magazines. It is imperative that future research determines whether magazine images of girls who are presumably more typical and representative invite more image-comparison among readers of color. An important complement to such a study would be to track how the authority of the family and community as an arbiter of African American beauty is affected by the inclusion of more minority models and real girls of color in mainstream teen magazines.

Teen magazines and other marketers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the needs of people of color, for one simple reason: The U.S. Census estimates that by year 2010, 39% of the teen population will be made up of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other non-Whites. Once Black girls' perspective on the mediated beauty culture has been changed from that of outsider to insider, will African American girls lose some of the critical distance that has allowed them to sustain relatively high levels of body confidence and self-esteem? African American girls have suggested that more pictures of Black girls per issue is a shallow form of inclusion. In order to represent these girls well, mainstream teen magazines must recognize not only Black images and interests, but also African American cultural values that mitigate the narrow vision of beauty that has heretofore dominated mainstream teen magazines.

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Hate Speech and the Third-Person Effect: Susceptibility, Severity, and the Willingness to Censor

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Hate Speech and the Third-Person Effect: Susceptibility, Severity, and the Willingness to Censor

ABSTRACT

The concern that hate speech may provoke actual violence shares a commonality with the third-person effect hypothesis, which predicts that as people perceive "harmful" messages to have a greater effect on others than on themselves, they will be more likely to support censoring those messages. In a randomized telephone survey of 407 adults in a major Midwestern metropolitan area, this study find support for both the perceptual and behavioral components of the third-person effect in the context of hate speech.

Hate Speech and the Third-Person Effect: Susceptibility, Severity, and the Willingness to Censor

In Texas in June, 1998, three men chained James Byrd Jr. to a truck and dragged him to his death. Byrd, a black man, was apparently killed as part of a rite of initiation for a white supremacist group. In Wyoming in October, 1998, two men brutally beat Matthew Shepard and tied his body to a fence because he was gay. In Alabama in February, 1999, two men beat Billy Jack Gaither to death with an ax handle and then burned his body, allegedly because he had made a sexual advance toward them. News reports about vicious killings such as these – motivated by the victim's race, religion, or sexual orientation – have heightened public concern about hate crimes. David Smith, a spokesperson for the Human Rights campaign, a gay and lesbian political group in Washington, D.C., summarized the fear in the wake of Gaither's death, saying "What's becoming very clear is that hate in this country is turning lethal with alarming frequency" (2 Alabama Men, A13).

State and federal governments have taken steps to counter bias-motivated crimes by passing legislation such as the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (18 U.S.C. 245), which established a coordinated nationwide system for collecting data about hate crimes. In a 1993 case the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a Wisconsin statute which enhanced penalties for crimes motivated by a victim's race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity (*Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 508 U.S. 476). By 1998, 40 states and the District of Columbia had enacted similar penalty-enhancement laws for hate crimes.

The prevention of hate crimes is clearly on the legislative agenda. However, the question of how best to react, as a society, to hate *speech* is much less clear. Our strong national commitment to protecting freedom of speech – even for ideas most people find reprehensible – makes this issue problematic. From the perspective of traditional First Amendment theory, the best way to counter undesirable speech is to encourage *more* speech rather than to censor the offending communication. But hate speech creates a thorny dilemma, because it pits a commitment to free speech against the desire to be intolerant of racism (Sniderman 1996, 57). Additionally, some argue that hate speech has real, predictable, and harmful consequences – that it is essentially the precursor to hate crime, and therefore should be censored.[1] The growth of the Internet has magnified these concerns with regard to hate speech. Morris Dees, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center suggests

> the Internet has done for hate groups what the printing press has done for literature. Before, these groups would post a message on a bulletin board and few people would see it. Now, they post a message on the Net and millions see it. We should be outraged and alarmed, because these ideas can lead to violent events (McCafferty, 7).

If people believe that hate speech may provoke actual violence, they may be motivated to censor such speech because they are concerned about its effects on others. This approach shares some commonality with a perceptual distinction termed the third-person effect. The third-person effect hypothesis (see Davison 1983) predicts that people perceive "harmful" or "dangerous" messages to have a greater effect on others than on themselves, and as a result become more inclined to censor those messages (Gunther 1995; Rojas et al. 1996). Said another way, people may believe that hate speech does not have negative effects on them but fear it will adversely effect others. As a result, they become more likely to support restrictions on racially or socially hateful communications.

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[1] There is an on-going debate among legal scholars about the appropriate social response to hate speech. See for example Matsuda et. al. (1993) and Gey (1996) for the opposing viewpoints. The U.S. Supreme Court is also divided on the appropriate response to hate speech (see the 5-4 decision in *R.A.V. v. St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377).

Third-person effect

Many studies, across a variety of message topics and utilizing both experiments and surveys, have consistently found that people do see a discrepancy between the effects of media on others and on themselves (Lasorsa 1992; Perloff 1993; Price and Tewksbury 1996; Tiedge et al. 1991). Research suggests that people are more likely to systematically overestimate the extent to which others are affected by mass media than they are to underestimate that effect on themselves (Gunther 1991). In exploring the limits of this phenomenon, theorists assert that certain conditions may enhance the effect: biased perceptions are more likely (a) if the topic is self-relevant, (b) if the message is perceived as undesirable, or (c) if the third-persons are psychologically distant (Brosius and Engel 1996).

Research shows that those who consider an issue important (Mutz 1989), perceive themselves as experts (Lasorsa 1989), or are otherwise ego-invested tend to believe that others will be influenced by communications. Expanding upon Vallone, Ross, and Lepper's (1985) work on the "hostile media phenomenon," Perloff (1989) found strong support for the idea that ego-involvement influences the perception of mass media effects on others; in his study, both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab partisans inaccurately estimated that the same news coverage would cause nonpartisans to become less favorable toward their position. Under involving conditions, then, individuals may overestimate the magnitude of media effects on third-persons. Perloff suggests that this occurs because these people evoke "media effects schema" – mental categories of beliefs that mass media are manipulative and that people are impressionable.

Rucinski and Salmon (1990) and Gunther (1991) account for the third-person effect using cognitive theories of causal attribution. Specifically, errors in basic attributional processes may be responsible for the disjuncture in perceived media effects between self and other. As Gunther (1991) explains, observers generally underestimate other people's awareness of situational (external) factors such as the persuasive intent of media content; however, when judging the impact of media on themselves, observers usually account for their own attentiveness to such situational factors. Thus, they attribute relatively more opinion change to others, while viewing themselves as less susceptible to message effects (see Jones 1990; Miller et al. 1981; Ross 1977). Observers may also engage in self-serving biases – or egotistical differential attributions (Miller 1976; Stephan and Gollwitzer 1981). When a message is deemed negative or when being persuaded by it would be regarded as unintelligent, they estimate more influence on others in order to enhance their perception of personal invulnerability and control.

Given this attributional explanation, it in not surprising that most tests of the third-person effect hypothesis focus on the *susceptibility* dimension by requiring research participants to estimate how "influential" or "powerful" certain communications are on self and others; in contrast, *severity* is usually "conceived *a priori* based on message attributes" (Salwen, Dupagne & Paul 1998, p. 5.; see also Hu & Wu 1997; McLeod et al. 1997; Price, Huang, & Tewksbury 1997; Rojas et al. 1996; Tewksbury, Huang, & Price 1996; Shah et al. 1997; White 1997; Willnat 1996). Though rarely tested, support for a discrete severity dimension can be found in the fact that the magnitude of the third-person effect decreases as the desirability of the communication effect increases. Message content judged to be negative is assumed to influence others more than one's-self; however, when the message is thought to be positive, the perceptual bias is substantially attenuated (Innes & Zeitz 1988). For example, Gunther and Thorson (1992), who studied public service announcements (PSAs) and product and service advertisements, found that for PSAs there was no statistical difference between the perceived effects on self and others. On the other hand, for advertisements, the third-person effect did appear, but as advertisements increasingly created a positive emotion in the viewer, the magnitude of third-person perception weakened. Similarly, Brosius and Engel (1996) found that framing media impact in negative rather than positive terms partly explains the difference in perceived effects. Thus, a number of studies show that desirable messages lessen but do not completely eliminate the discrepancy between self and others, suggesting that benefit/harm appraisal is one but not the sole perceptual process underlying the third-person effect (Gunther & Mundy 1993; Salwen et al 1998).

To account for these findings, Gunther and Mundy (1993) refer to work on *unrealistic optimism* (see Weinstein 1980). According to this perspective, people reinforce self-esteem with a bias toward positive personal outcome; as such, the *benefit likelihood* of a topic determines the size of the discrepancy between perceived effects on self and others. Yet even with this explanation of how judgments about the negative consequences of message content contribute to third-person perception, only a few scholars have assessed whether a third-person distinction can be found in assessments of the *severity* of message effects. Notably, research that conceives of third-person perception in these terms has found support for differential estimates of severity (Ognianova, Thorson, & Rahn 1995; see also Salwen et al. 1998). For instance, Rucinski and Salmon (1990) and Cohen and Davis (1991) detected that individuals believed political attack advertising had a more "harmful" or "negative" effect on others than on themselves.[2]

Regardless of how the third-person effect was conceptualized, most of the initial research that looked for a linkage between third-person perception and the willingness to censor, or other behavioral outcomes, failed to detect one (Gunther 1991; Perloff 1993). One rationale for these findings is that people do not exhibit the expected behavior because they view their perspective as different from the opinion of the general public; a spiral of silence effect inhibits their behavior (Mutz 1989). However, recent research links differences in the estimated influence of communications on self and others with the willingness to censor pornography, violence on television, controversial rap lyrics, and political communications (Gunther 1995; Gunther & Hwa 1996; Lee & Yang 1996; McLeod et al. 1997; Rojas et al. 1996; Salwen 1998; Shah et al. 1997). Theorists explain this relationship as "strong paternalism" because it is based on the assumption that people are incapable of contending with media content for themselves and that social intervention is the only way to protect them from communications' adverse effects (McLeod et al. 1997; Rojas et al. 1996). However, no direct linkage has been observed within the context of hate speech.

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[2] Cohen and Davis (1991) asked participants to indicate whether their own opinions and the opinions of others would be "more negative" or "more positive" towards a candidate who was the target of political attack advertising. Somewhat similarly, Rucinski and Salmon (1990) measured harm on a 1('not at all harmful") to 10 ('very harmful') scale, while concurrently measuring a second dimension of "influence" on a separate scale. Others also have distinguished between these dimensions: Ognianova et al. (1996) asked questions about both the amount of influence and the direction of the effect, whereas Salwen et al. (1998) call for a distinction between the *power* of the media and the *moral effects* of the media. Notably, some third-person research has combined susceptibility and severity in a unified measure. For example, Gunther (1995) and Lee and Yang (1997) ask subjects to estimate media impact on self and others by responding to a five-point scale labeled with the following categories: (1) a large negative effect, (2) a small negative effect, (3) no effect at all, (4) a small positive effect, (5) a large positive effect.

Censorship

Most work on tolerance for speech has occurred within the field of political science. A substantial body of theory has developed around research exploring the factors that predict individual tolerance or intolerance (Corbett 1982; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood 1995; McClosky & Brill 1983). In contrast, research on factors contributing to individuals' support for expressive rights of mass media has been rather limited (Andsager 1993; Immerwahr & Doble 1982; Miller et al. 1992; Shao & Hill 1994; Tewksbury et al. 1996; Worchel, Arnold, & Baker 1975). Perhaps due to the range of topics that have faced censorship demands, no clear consensus has emerged concerning the factors associated with the willingness to censor. Some previous research reports that people who claim a strong religious affiliation are more likely to oppose civil liberties than those who profess no religious affiliation (see McClosky and Brill 1983; White 1986). Somewhat similarly, Bobo and Licari (1989), Tewksbury et al. (1996), and McLeod et al. (1997) conclude that conservatives are less tolerant of controversial speech than political liberals (for a contrasting perspective, see Suedfeld, Steel, & Schmidt 1994). However, these reported relationships are not consistently upheld in other research. For example, Rojas et al (1996) do not observe a meaningful association between religiosity and the willingness to restrict television violence. Other studies find non-significant differences between conservatives and liberals in terms of tolerance for speech (Christensen & Dunlap 1984; Protho & Grigg 1960; Thompson 1995; Thompson, Chaffee, & Oshagan 1990). It should be noted the most of this research targeted forms of mass communication or speech acts that conservative and highly religious individuals find offensive -- i.e. controversial books or rap lyrics. Thus, these insights may not carry over to concerns about hate speech, which have typically been voiced by political liberals (see Sniderman 1996, pp. 62-70).

Comparable confusion surrounds demographic predictors. Some studies suggest that men are more supportive of expressive rights than women (Lambe 1998; Andsager 1992, 1993; Miller et al. 1992; Wilson 1975). However, Tewksbury et al. (1996) do not report a relationship with gender among a research population of undergraduates (see also Schell & Bonin 1989). White (1986) also failed to find differences based on gender in secondary analysis of national survey data, but observed that the willingness to censor increases with age and decreases with higher levels of education. While other research supports this linkage between educational level and tolerance for speech (Erskine 1970; Miller et al. 1992), Ryan and Martinson (1986) report no significant differences based on age or level of education in terms of a willingness to censor the student press (see also Schell & Bonin 1989). Further, one recent study finds that news consumption is negatively related to the willingness to censor (Shah, et. al. 1999). However, this finding has not been substantiated by other research.

Thus, the existing literature provides a limited theoretical framework for understanding the motivations for censorship. Demographic, orientational, and attitudinal predictors provide contradictory results depending on the topic and the population under study. The only commonality across censorship studies appears to be the belief that exposure produces negative consequences. Regardless of context, a key justification for restricting or banning media content remains the perceived harmful effects of the message or the perceived threat posed by the communicator (Marcus et al. 1995; Sullivan et al. 1982).

Combining these insights with scholarship on the third-person effect raises the prospect that attempts to censor communications may be motivated by concerns about the effects of communications on others. That is, when a perceived threat is not grounded in individual behavior (i.e., choosing to smoke or engaging in unprotected sex) but rather is societal is scope, basic attributional processes suggest that individuals will perceive others to be more susceptible to this danger than themselves. Indeed, censors defend their actions as allegedly protecting the "helpless" from threatening ideas, and often view themselves as morally superior to the "vulnerable" populations they wish to protect (Dority 1991; Frohnmayer 1994).[3] Further, research suggests that advocates for censorship overestimate the negative influence of media on others (the "gullible" public) (Gunther 1995; Gunther & Hwa 1996; McLeod et al. 1997; Rojas et al. 1996; Salwen 1998). Thus, people advocating censorship should see large differences in the perceived susceptibility and severity of messages on themselves versus these others.

Hypotheses

We expect to see differences in perceived effects on self versus others in terms of both susceptibility and severity. They are two conceptually distinct perceptual dimensions that may both be subject to the perceptual bias posited by the third-person effect. However, the size of the gap should be larger for susceptibility than severity, because as Shah et al. (1999) argue "people perceive themselves as much better able than others to avoid being influenced by undesirable messages, but believe there is less of a difference in the adverse consequences of the impact if it were to occur" (p. 257). We predict that:

H1a: People will perceive others to be more susceptible than themselves to hate speech.

H1b: People will perceive the effects of hate speech to be more severe (negative) on others than on themselves.

H1c: The gap between estimates of effect on self and others will be greater for perceptions of susceptibility than for perceptions of severity.

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[3] This seemingly altruistic explanation for support of censorship may be motivated, in part, by self-interest. It is possible that people favor censorship of communications because they believe the result will be a safer social environment and thus a safer place for them as individuals.

The harmful or threatening nature of a message is central to demands for restriction of such messages (Marcus et. al. 1995). Furthermore, research suggests that censors traditionally feel that they are not being adversely affected by the information that they seek to prohibit even though they have been exposed to it repeatedly (Hense and Wright 1992). If, as previous research suggests, the third-person effect is contingent on the type of message and how harmful the communication is considered to be, perceived effects on others may be directly related to pro-censorship attitudes (Gunther 1995; Rojas, et. al. 1996) Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Perceived effects on others will predict willingness to censor hate speech.

Research suggests that attitudinal, orientational and demographic variables may be related to censorship attitudes – although the precise nature of these relationships is not clearly specified. Research on the third-person effect, however, suggests that perceived effects on others will be a robust predictor of willingness to censor irrespective of its relationship to other variables. Therefore, we expect that:

H3: Perceived effects on others will be positively related to willingness to censor hate speech, even after accounting for other confounding variables.

Methodology

Data were collected in a large Midwestern city in the summer of 1998, as part of a multi-investigator telephone survey. The survey sample consisted of households selected randomly from all telephone exchanges in the metropolitan area. The "most recent birthday" selection method was used to select an individual from within the household to respond to the survey. Overall, 407 telephone interviews were completed. The response rate was 55%. Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology was used to conduct the survey, which permitted the introduction of alternate question wordings.

To assess the willingness to censor hate speech, each subject was asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: *It should be against the law to write or speak in a way that promotes hatred toward a particular racial or religious group.*[4] The distribution on this item was U-shaped – only 8% of respondents were neutral, and 53% either somewhat or strongly agreed that there should be a law against hate speech. For the purposes of analysis, then, we dichotomized the variable into those who somewhat or strongly agreed and those who were neutral or somewhat or strongly disagreed.

Using the CATI technology, respondents were also asked to estimate either (a) the perceived susceptibility of themselves and others to hate speech (n=184) OR (b) the perceived severity of hate speech on themselves and others (n=223). Variations in the question wording were randomly generated.[5]

In addition to the questions included in this study, respondents answered queries about their media use, their favorability ratings toward political leaders and selected groups of people, social trust issues, willingness to pay higher taxes for educational improvements, and political knowledge.

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[4] It should be noted that we did not include "sexual orientation" in our question wording. Although there has been a good deal of news coverage about hate crimes toward members of the gay community, FBI statistics on hate crimes indicate that more than 75% of hate crimes are motivated by the victim's racial or religious affiliation (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1998).

[5] See exact question wordings in Appendix A. Note that the raw susceptibility response score is on a 4-point scale, while the raw severity response score is on a 5-point scale. These scores were standardized before the analyses were conducted.

Results

Tests of the perceptual component(s) of the third person effect

Hypothesis 1a predicted that people will perceive others as more susceptible to hate speech than themselves. Further, it was hypothesized (1b) that hate speech will be perceived to have a more severe influence on others than on oneself. To test these hypotheses, perceived effects on self were subtracted from the perceived effects on others to create a "gap" variable for the susceptibility and severity measures. The distributions of the gap variables were examined, and paired t-tests were run on the mean 3rd person and 1st person scores.

Further, hypothesis 1c predicted that the size of the gap would be greater for estimates of susceptibility than for estimates of severity. A comparison of the gap distributions for the susceptibility versus severity dimensions tested this proposition. Additionally, a t-test was run on the mean gap scores for the susceptibility and severity dimensions.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The distributions of the gap measures clearly show that for most respondents, the estimate of the effects of hate speech on others are greater than their estimates of the effects of hate speech on themselves. Only 4% of the respondents believed that they are more *susceptible* to the effects of hate speech than are others, while approximately 17% estimated that hate speech has a more *negative* effect on themselves than on others. The pattern of distribution for the gap measure supports hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c.

For estimates of susceptibility, the mean scores were significantly higher on others than on self, with a difference of 1.30. Differences in the mean scores for severity estimates were also significant, although not as striking, with a difference of just .32. As predicted, the gap size for estimates of susceptibility were significantly greater than for that of perceived severity.

Tests of the behavioral component of the third person effect

The third-person effect posits that overestimating the effect of messages on others leads to an increased support for censoring those messages. Thus, hypothesis 2 predicted that perceptions of the effect of hate speech on others would predict willingness to censor hate speech. To test this hypothesis, the zero-order correlation between these variables was examined, combining both the susceptibility and severity dimensions. There is a significant, positive correlation between a person's estimated effect on others and their willingness to censor hate speech ($r=.10$; $p<.05$).

Finally, we predicted in hypothesis 3 that the relationship between estimated effects on others and willingness to censor would be robust even when controlling for other variables. We performed a logistic regression on willingness to censor, including in our analysis measures of a variety of potentially confounding variables.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

When controlling for a variety of demographic and attitudinal variables, the estimated effects on others are positively related, and are marginally significant ($p=.06$) in relation to the willingness to censor.

The regression indicates that several other variables are significantly related to the willingness to censor hate speech. Sex is positively related, suggesting that women are more willing to censor hate speech than are men.[6] The results also show that age is positively related to an increased willingness to support restrictions on hate speech. Newspaper use shows a negative relationship, indicating that increased levels of use predict a decrease in willingness to censor hate speech.[7]

Discussion

The results of this study provide support for conceptualizing the perceptual component of the third-person effect as at least a bi-dimensional construct. Our data show that people do make differential judgments about the perceived effect of communications on self and others when considering susceptibility to a message versus the severity of the message.

This research also supports the existence of the perceptual and behavioral components of the third-person effect in the context of hate speech. Across both the susceptibility and severity dimensions, subjects demonstrated a greater perceived impact of hate speech on others than on themselves. Additionally, this estimated effect on others is positively related to a greater willingness to censor hate speech.

Because this was a multi-investigator survey, we were unable to conduct a variety of analyses that would better specify the predictors of willingness to censor hate speech. A multi-item, non-dichotomous measure of the criterion variable would provide a better indication of willingness to censor hate speech. In terms of the key independent variables, future research should measure estimates of both severity and susceptibility for each subject so as to be able to more fully examine the impact of these discrete perceptual components of the third-person effect on attitudes toward hate speech.

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[6] This replicates the findings of Lambe (1998), who found that among college students women were significantly more likely to support censorship of hate speech and pornography than were men.

[7] It should be noted that there was little variance on several of the measures included in the regression. For example, only 3% of the sample were not U.S. citizens, only 1% were Jewish, and only 16% were nonwhite.

Other attitudinal and demographic variables should be included in future research as well. Measures of prejudice towards a variety of social groups, measures of threat predisposition, need for cognition, conservatism, religiosity, authoritarianism and personality variables such as Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness (Costa and McCrae 1985; Marcus et. al 1995) have been useful predictors of censorship attitudes in previous research. Examining these variables will permit better specification of the relationship between third-person perceptions and willingness to censor hate speech.

Finally, the results of this study raise additional questions from a social policy perspective. Support for restriction of hate speech appears to be based in part on the *perception* or fear of an effect on others. To make informed decisions about how to best handle hate speech on a societal level, it is important to further examine the question of whether exposure to hate speech does in fact serve as a precursor to hate crimes.

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Table 1

Tests of third person effects:
Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c

Distribution of gap measures (effect on others - effect on self)

- *Susceptibility/influence gap*

Score	%
-1	3.9
0	25.3
1	34.8
2	34.3
3	1.7

- *Severity/negativity gap*

Score	%
-3	1.5
-2	1.0
-1	14.7
0	40.1
1	34.0
2	7.1
3	1.5

T-tests

- *Susceptibility/influence gap*

Mean 3rd	Mean 1st	p-value
3.74	2.44	.000

- *Severity/negativity gap*

Mean 3rd	Mean 1st	p-value
3.83	3.51	.000

T-test of difference in gap size for estimates of susceptibility and severity

- *mean scores of gap size with dichotomous susceptibility/severity wording variable*

susceptibility	severity	p-value
1.31	.32	.000

Table 2

Logistic regression of willingness to censor hate speech

Variables	Beta[a]
sex[b]	.72**
age	.02*
education	.03
income	-.07
has kids	.19
U.S. citizen	7.62
nonwhite[c]	-.14
religion[d]	.15
party i.d.[e]	-.01
political knowledge	-.06
newspaper use	-.10*
attitude towards media	-.10
social trust predisposition	-.18
effect on self (1st person, standardized)	.08
effect on others (3rd person, standardized)	.26+

n=319 +p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01

NOTES:

[a] all variables entered in a single block

[b] Coded as 1=male, 2=female

[c] Coded as 0=white, 1=nonwhite

[d] Coded as 0=non-jewish, 1=jewish

[e] Coded as 1=strong republican, 4=independent, 7=strong democrat

Appendix A

Question Wordings for Susceptibility and Severity Measures

[3rd person measure –susceptibility/ influence]

3a. Next I want you to estimate how much certain kinds of speech influences your attitudes and the attitudes of others.

3a1. How much influence do you think speech that promotes hatred towards particular groups has on your attitudes toward these groups? Does it have a great deal of influence, some influence, not much influence, or no influence at all?

1=a great deal of influence; 4=no influence at all

3a2. How much influence do you think speech that promotes hatred towards particular groups has on the attitudes of other people? Does it have a great deal of influence, some influence, not much influence, or no influence at all?

1=a great deal of influence; 4=no influence at all

[3rd person measure –severity/ negativity]

3b. Next I want you to estimate how your attitudes and the attitudes of others are affected by certain kinds of speech.

3b1. How does speech that promotes hatred towards particular groups affect your attitudes toward these groups? Does it have a very negative effect, somewhat negative effect, no effect at all, a somewhat positive effect, or a very positive effect?

1=very negative effect; 5=very positive effect

3b2. How does speech that promotes hatred towards particular groups affect the attitudes of other people? Does it have a very negative effect, somewhat negative effect, no effect at all, a somewhat positive effect, or a very positive effect?

1=very negative effect; 5=very positive effect

Note: The raw susceptibility response score is on a 4-point scale, while the raw severity response score is on a 5-point scale. These scores were standardized before the analyses were conducted.

The media, Susan Smith, and the mythical black kidnapper: Why don't I trust my black/white neighbor?

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ABSTRACT

The media, Susan Smith, and the mythical black kidnapper:
Why don't I trust my black/white neighbor?

As an example of how the media works as a legitimator of dominate culture, this paper looks critically and specifically at the 1994 case of Susan Smith and the media's coverage of the alleged kidnapping of her children by a black male. The common sense, naturalized images and myths about blacks espoused in much of today's media rhetoric are symbolic of the distrust sustained by the media that must be overcome by whites and blacks.

The media, Susan Smith, and the mythical black kidnapper:
Why don't I trust my black/white neighbor?

Introduction

Boston, Massachusetts, and Union, South Carolina. What do these two towns -- one in the North and one in the South -- have in common? They are both sites where a mythical black man committed a heinous crime.

Boston: Oct. 23, 1989, Charles Stuart claimed that a black gunman in a jogging suit fatally shot and killed Carol Stuart (who was seven months pregnant) and wounded Stuart in the stomach. The story received national coverage and Stuart became the martyred hero who lay in a hospital bed with tears in his eyes composing love letters to his dead wife and child (who died 17 days after doctors performed an emergency c-section on Carol's body to save him). The police went on a rampage in Boston and "hundreds of men in Mission Hill whose only connection to the case was that they were young and black were stopped and frisked" (Carlson, 1990, p. 10).

Union: Oct. 25, 1994, Susan Smith claimed that a black man in his twenties wearing a plaid jacket, jeans and a knit cap carjacked her and took off with her two young boys (aged 3 and 14 months) who were in the backseat of the car. This tragic event rated nationwide coverage in the national press (ex. The New York Times and Washington Post) and on television. At one point, Smith even appeared on the "Today" show begging the kidnapper to release her children. A composite sketch of this young, black male villain was also run in papers and on televisions across the nation.

The truth -- there was no black male villain in either case. Stuart killed his own wife and shot himself to make everything look convincing. Smith deliberately rolled her car into a lake and drowned her own children who were in car seats in the backseat. Both alleged victims lied. Both paid. Stuart by jumping off a bridge to his death; Smith by being sentenced to life in prison. But what about the black and white people across the nation who had been subjected to this media circus? Where did these lies leave race relations and what was the media's role?

Marable Manning (1994) says that racial stereotypes are "deeply rooted" in American society. He cites a 1993 survey funded by the National Science Foundation of over 2,200 American adults measuring their racial attitudes as proof. He quotes the study's directors as saying, "the most striking result of [the study] is the sheer frequency with which negative characterizations of blacks are quite openly expressed throughout the white general population" (p. 15). Of the white conservatives and liberals, 51 percent and 45 percent respectively agreed that "blacks are aggressive and violent;" 34 percent of conservatives and 19 percent of liberals thought "blacks are lazy;" and 21 percent of conservatives and 17 percent of liberals thought of blacks as "irresponsible" (p. 16). Manning concluded from this survey that "white liberals dislike blacks almost as much as white conservatives" (p. 16). But what explains these negative views of blacks? It is these views that allow Stuart and Smith to call on a mythical black murderer/kidnapper and gain sympathy and belief nationwide. And where are these views coming from?

Dates and Pease (1994) say that many of these images come from the media. They speak in terms of perceptions:

> As we end the 20th century, young people (and older) are taught -- largely through media repetitions of social myths, misconceptions, stupidity and outright

> bigotry -- to view people as types locked into certain stereotypical, inalterable (and inaccurate) modes. Puerto Ricans are oily and drive Chevies with loud stereos. Black women are single mothers on welfare; black men are violent. . . . White men are successful, happy and drive BMWs. And so on. The media project images of each of these groups and others that create, reinforce and perpetuate popular "knowledge" of them that rarely is grounded in reality, "knowledge" on which members of those groups themselves as well as others in society form judgments and act. It is a dangerous, divisive and wasteful world that the media create. (p. 93)

The media are dangerous because they "reflect and transmit society's predominant values and ideology, mass media images help to define the collective experience, shape social consciousness, and serve to legitimate current conditions" (p. 94). As an example of how the media works as a legitimator of dominate culture, in this paper I will look specifically at the 1994 case of Susan Smith and the media's coverage of the alleged kidnapping of her children by a black male.

Infamous conservative William F. Buckley Jr. (1994) argued in the National Review that to look at this issue through the lens of race was ridiculous. He says,

> the point, surely, is that the wretched woman chose to give a plausible story to the police. Surely it was easier simply to say "black" because blacks are widely accepted as given to crime at a heavier rate than whites . . . . If Mrs. Smith had said that the kidnapper was an albino, or a dwarf, or one-armed, heavier attention would have been given to his identifying characteristics. But the child-killer, straining for maximum plausibility, simply reaches into the pool of averages in search of a "typical" criminal. Americans who watch television news and see occasional police lineups have a sense of it that blacks, though they make up only 12 per cent of the population, commit over one-half the violent crimes. (p. 71)

This commentary contains exactly the issues I want to address. The common sense, naturalized images and myths about blacks espoused in this media rhetoric are symbolic of the distrust sustained by the media that must be overcome by whites and blacks. Racial stereotypes, as perpetuated by the media, do damage interracial trust and incidents such as Smith's lying make a bad situation worse. A child snatcher is a horrible thing. If the kidnapper is black and the victim white, then all the prejudiced stereotypes and racial distrust come flooding to the forefront of white minds. When a police sketch is released that could be any black man -- the black community knows that it must hole up (black men especially since all blacks begin to look mysteriously alike) and face looks of distrust and disgust until the villain is captured. Even Buckley (a bastion of white male conservatism) points out that TV images of black criminals make it more "plausible" for Smith to accuse a black man even though "young black males constituted 17.7 percent of all homicide victims, even though they made up only 1,3 percent of the U.S. population . . . . [and that] black men over age 24 were victims of homicide at a rate of 65.7 per 100,000, compared with 7.8 per 100,000 white men" (Giroux, 1995, p. 57).

These statistics coupled with the fact that it generates more sympathy for the white victim when there is a black attacker signifies that there is something that must be examined here. In this paper, I will paint an ideological contextual picture of the state of black and white race relations in America today and how the media works to distort these relationships and legitimize and normalize the stereotypical viewpoint of white America. By decoding mainstream press coverage of the Smith incident in New York Times and Washington Post beginning Oct. 28, 1994, and ending Nov. 30, 1994, (this is the hot point-- when coverage of Smith and the kidnapper was most intense) using textual analysis and framing techniques and then analyzing the text according to critical theory (especially critical race theory), I will be able to demystify the way the media legitimates and reinforces a negative view of blacks and thus encourages interracial distrust. The primary focus of this paper will be on the critical ideological state of race relations and the Smith case will be used as evidence that the media normalizes a stereotypical view of blacks that keeps trust from growing between blacks and white by enabling whites to see blacks only as a homogenous group and not as individuals.

I will use textual analysis and frame theory to help organize my thoughts and notes. Both tools look at the way certain points in a news narrative are emphasized and others are not. Textual analysis is also one of the primary tools used by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham whose critical/cultural and critical race theory will inform my critique. Textual analysis also "allows the researcher to discern latent meaning, but also implicit patterns and emphases of text" (Fürsich & Lester, 1996, p. 29).

Ideological Exploration of Trust, Race and the Media

Trust. The media works hard to create a credible, objective image that delivers to its audience the facts and nothing but the facts. But the media deliver a lot more than mere facts. They deliver a way of thinking. A way of framing images and texts that allows the audience to understand exactly what they mean. Entman (1991) says that news frames are "constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative" (p. 7). The frames work "by providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others" thereby making "some ideas more salient in the text, others less so -- and others entirely invisible." We can decode, according to Hall (1980), an oppositional meaning, but we cannot ignore the preferred meaning that we also decode and process before coming into opposition to it. Entman (1991) also refers to oppositional and preferred meanings and says that news frames will contain some inconsistencies, but "through repetition, placement, and reinforcing association with each other, the words and images that comprise the frame render one basic interpretation more readily discernible, comprehensible, and memorable than others" (p. 7). Therefore, the media does not deal in simply the facts.

The media, though they are not the only producers of meaning, produce widely distributed preferred meanings and, according to Hall (1990), "construct for us a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the 'problem of race' is understood to be" (his emphasis, p. 11). Furthermore, Hall states, "Institutions like the media are peculiarly central to the matter [production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies] since they are, by definition, part of the dominant means of ideological production." In order to place Hall's statements into the proper context, one must understand the critical meaning of ideology as I will use it in this paper.

In the introduction to Politics and Ideology, Donald and Hall (1986) define ideology as a term used to "indicate the frameworks of thought which are used in society to explain, figure out, make sense of or give meaning to the social and political world" (p. ix). Hall further explains his theory of ideology as being "a field of possible sites of contradiction and contestation" (Grossberg, 1985, p. 198). The validity of this statement is explored by examining the media's function as the dominant patriarchal society's way of producing ideology. Although the media may produce or reproduce the dominant ideology, they cannot prevent subordinate classes from circumventing them and putting forth an alternative ideology of their own in the form of a subculture. Sometimes, though time or appropriation, the subordinates' ideology becomes that of the dominant culture, and thus, we have eternal contradiction and contestation -- which is the site of change.

For example, at one point in history the idea that all men are created equal only applied to white males. Marginalized and subordinate people such as white women and slaves (male and female) were not equal and thought to be less deserving of the rights of white men. Through time and appropriation, the subordinate's ideology -- that they were not inferior to white men and that they were deserving of equal rights -- became a part of the dominant ideology that exists to this day. This is not to say that the media as forms of dominant ideology production and representation are any less powerful, but it does say that change is possible.

An interesting addition to this theory is Nichols' (1981) theorization of ideology "in terms of an imaginary (as opposed to symbolic) relationship to the material processes of communication and exchange" (p. 3). He says that

> *Imaginary* here does not mean unreal, existing only in the imagination, but rather pertains to views, images, fiction, or representations that contribute to our sense of who we are and to our everyday engagement with the world around us. These images are the signs of social representation, the markers or bearers of ideology. (his emphasis, p.3)

When we accepted that Susan Smith's story was true and a black assailant had taken her children, the imaginary came into play. As previously stated, both white liberals and conservatives believe that blacks are violent, so it was a horrible, but not unexpected occurrence that a violent black male with a gun might take off with some white children -- to white society. Many of the black people whom I encountered after Smith's startling announcement could not understand how her assailant could stop the car and let her out and not let her take the children. It did not make sense. What did he want them for? He had to know that it would be worse for him to be "caught with some white kids." For black people, common sense demanded that he would not have taken the children in the first place and if he did he certainly "would have gotten rid of them as soon as possible" knowing that the police would be tracking him "down like a dog." The history of blacks in America and black culture taught blacks that if he took 'em, he wasn't keeping 'em.

Which brings us to the issue of culture. A definition of ideology is not complete without a definition of culture which goes hand-in-hand with ideology. Culture, as defined by Hall and Jefferson (1976), is the "particular and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meaning, values, and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relation, in systems of beliefs, in mores and customs in the uses of objects and material life" (p. 10). It is important to this paper to note that the difference between culture and ideology is that each class can have a culture, but when one culture dominates the other, and "subordinate culture experiences itself in terms prescribed by the dominant culture, then the dominant culture has also become the basis of dominant ideology" (their emphasis, Donald & Hall, 1976, p. 12). The turning of dominant culture into dominant ideology is one of the media's chief functions.

Because the dominant culture in America is that of the white majority, the racist ideologies inscribed within often become an intrinsic part of the mainstream media. Race and the "racial problem" is then constructed for our viewing pleasure by the media. Hall (1990) states that British racism is grounded in slavery relations and can be historically characterized in three ways:

> (1) Their imagery and themes were polarized around fixed relations of subordination and domination. (2) Their stereotypes were grouped around the poles of 'superior' and 'inferior' natural species. (3) Both were displaced from the 'language of history into the language of Nature. Natural physical signs and racial characteristics became the unalterable signifiers of inferiority. Subordinate ethnic groups and classes appeared, not as the objects of particular historical relations (the slave trade, European colonisation, the active underdevelopment of

> the 'underdeveloped' societies), but as the given qualities of an inferior breed. (his emphasis, p. 14)

These same historical characteristics remain, whether one speaks of the historical construction of British or American racism. These characteristics are the foundation of today's racism in America and its media.

The New Racism and the Media

Wilson and Gutiérrez (1995) characterize the media by five developmental phases that they identify as (a) exclusionary, (b) threatening issue, (c) confrontation, (d) stereotypical selection, and (e) multiracial coverage phases (p. 152). The media are currently still entrenched in phase d, but in the beginning phase of e. Phase d is designed to "neutralize White apprehension of people of color while accommodating their presence" (p. 157). They cite examples of this type of story as being "success stories" in which a person of color overcomes some obstacle to embrace the symbols of wealth and prosperity that are so important to America; or "hard news" stories that emphasize police action and minorities; or "soft news" stories that are colorful and emphasize a minority cultural celebration of some sort. There is also the ever-present "welfare" stories that emphasize "non-Whites. . . who live in crime-infested neighborhoods; lack educational opportunity, job skills, and basic language skills; and, in the circumstance of Latinos and Southeast Asians, are probably not documented as U.S. citizens" (p. 157-158).

According to Wilson and Gutiérrez, the success stories help legitimize white patriarchal society in two ways: "(a) The general audience is reassured that non-Whites are still 'in their place' (i.e., the reservation, ghetto, etc.) and (b) those who escape their designated place are not a threat to society because they manifest the same values and ambitions as the dominant culture and overcome the deficits of their home communities"

(p. 157). Whereas, the sheer numbers of the "welfare stories" in the press, has caused some critics to say that the media characterizes non-whites as 'problem people,' "which means they are projected as people who either have problems or cause problems for society." Because non-whites are excluded from the press the majority of the time, it leads to "the general audience seeing people of color as a social burden" (p. 158).

It is tactics such as these that lead to what Entman (1990) calls modern racism. He says that 76 percent of all local TV stories about blacks are either crime or political stories. In the crime stories, blacks are the criminal. In the political stories, blacks are portrayed as only pursuing more rights for blacks or more affirmative action programs, etc. These stories and the fact that there are more blacks being seen by whites on television in comedies and as anchors and reporters have led whites to the false supposition that American society is an equal and just one. Jhally and Lewis's (1992) study of the "Cosby Show" revealed that "among white people, the admission of black characters to television's upwardly mobile world gives credence to the idea that racial divisions, whether perpetuated by class barriers or by racism, do not exist" (p. 135). They add that "almost any social index will show that we live in a society in which black and white people as groups are not equal -- not in education, health, housing, employment, ore wealth;" and then they question "so why is affirmative action suddenly thought to be no longer necessary?" (p. 135-136). They reveal that the answer is partly because "our popular culture tells us so."

The television shows that people watch nightly combined with the latest news shows that are infotainment (a mixture of news and entertainment) are blurring the line for audiences between televised reality and televised facts, although each is socially constructed. Jhally and Lewis posit that these shows have "pushed our culture backward" because most whites realize that black people "are disproportionately likely to live in poor neighborhood and drop out of school" they reconcile this with the shows like Cosby's by justifying in their minds that "if white people are disproportionately successful, then they must be disproportionately smarter or more willing to work hard" (p. 136). When the media justify the polarization of society based on social constructions of what are "naturally" inferior and superior it is performing a very sinister ideological process.

Jhally and Lewis (1994) call this enlightened racism while Entman (1990) calls it modern racism. Modern racism is defined as being composed of three components: "(1) anti-black affect -- a general emotional hostility toward blacks; (2) resistance to the political demands of blacks; (3) belief that racism is dead and that racial discrimination no longer inhibits black achievement" (Entman, 1990, pp. 332-333). Recent research has found that while whites rarely express old-fashioned racist ideas, political and social scientists "observing the contradiction between white Americans' endorsement of racial equality in the abstract and their often-intense opposition to concrete policies designed to produce more equality" (Entman, 1990, p. 334; Kinder & Sanders, 1995).

Kinder and Sanders (1995), using the 1992 national Election Study surveys, found that "most white Americans do in fact subscribe to racial stereotypes." According to the NES results, whites believe

> that blacks are less hardworking than whites, that blacks are more violent than whites, and that blacks are less intelligent than whites. Some whites see no difference between the races, but most of the variation among white Americans is in *how* inferior black Americans are, whether the racial superiority that whites enjoy in essential capacities and fundamental qualities is overwhelming or slight. (p. 114)

Despite these attitudes, Kinder and Sanders like Jhally and Lewis, find that "most white Americans believe that prejudice and discrimination are problems of the past" and that "black Americans see prejudice and discrimination everywhere' (p. 92).

This discrepancy in point-of-view can be explained only if we look, as Jhally and Lewis, did to the media. But where Jhally and Lewis only observed the effects that pop cultural images have on race relations, Dates and Pease (1994) take both the news and pop culture into account and discuss how "the norm in this country is that the perspective of white, mainstream men generally create the lenses through which America -- whether peripherally or directly -- views race, and itself" (pp. 89-90). Disregarding Hollywood for a moment, if just the broadcast newsrooms of America are examined we find that "minorities are largely employed either in high profile, on-camera positions or as camera operators rather than in editorial decision-making capacities . . . [and] only 4 % of local television news directors are people of color, and whites hold 92% of the supervisory jobs that usually lead to those positions, such as assistant news director, assignment editor or executive producer" (Campbell, 1995, p. 38).

hooks (1995) in Killing Rage/Ending Racism says that she lectures on race and racism all across America and is:

> always amazed when I hear white folks speak about their fear of black people, of being victims of black violence. They may never have spoken to a black person, and certainly never been hurt by a black person, but they are convinced that their first response to blackness must first and foremost be fear and dread. (p. 14)

As for black people, she says:

> though we do not live in the same fierce conditions of racial apartheid that only recently ceased being our collective social reality, most black folks believe that if they do not conform to white-determined standards of acceptable behavior

> [such as giving up black culture in terms of speech patterns, clothing, hair and assimilating and emulating white modes] they will not survive. (p. 15)

The problem that is at the heart of racism in America and the resulting rage that it produces within both white and black people is a fundamental lack of interracial trust. Dawes (1996) says that although the media give a substantial amount of coverage to race issues, the "truth is, however, that Americans, both black and white, talk a lot around the race issue" (p. 1). We do not speak to each other honestly and vulnerably because we are afraid to trust each other and the media perpetuate and accentuate this distrust and fear.

Trust and why it is necessary to heal race relations

Dr. Alvin Poussaint (1972), a noted black psychiatrist, states that the "American ethos is one of self-reliance, rugged individualism and out-doing one's neighbor," and he adds that there is evidence that suggests this "atmosphere encourages people to be violent, suspicious and at odds with one another" (p. 72). Within such an environment, it is no wonder that the dominant definition of trust is one of "encapsulated interest" (Hardin, 1990, 1993; Mansbridge, 1996). This meaning is predictive -- "I trust you up to the point at which my best estimate tell me you are trustworthy, and no more" (Mansbridge, 1996, p. 1). Still it is imperative that black and white people learn to trust each other, regardless of media portrayals.

Mansbridge (1996) says that there is a second meaning of trust as involving "a leap of faith slightly beyond that warranted by prediction" (1996, p. 1). She labels this type of trust as altruistic and explains that it is different from the idea of "encapsulated interest" and morally praiseworthy for three reasons:

> First, trusting behavior expresses respect for the other, treating the other as one would oneself wish to be treated. Second, trusting behavior expresses positive concern for the relationship. One may be willing to sacrifice oneself -- or take an

> unwarranted risk of sacrifice -- for the possibility of turning a potentially hostile into a potentially cooperative interaction. Third and least important, if the first two reasons are praiseworthy, placing oneself in the position of potential sacrifice may have positive future consequences outside the interaction, by modeling the virtuous action in similar circumstances. (p. 4)

Poussaint (1972) says of black Americans and trust: "By and large, black people have had faith in the ultimate goodness of whites and have acted with restraint. Our problem has not been that we have trusted whites too little, but perhaps that we have trusted them too much" (p. 70). Now, if we apply the definition of "encapsulated interest" to Poussaint's theory of black Americans trusting too much then black Americans should be pitied for being "'over-trusting,' predicting inaccurately in the direction of trusting more than is warranted by the information at hand" (Mansbridge, 1996, p. 2). In this case, it truly is a problem that black people have trusted white people beyond what they deserve or what is historically warranted. But the entire situation changes if we apply the definition of altruistic trust to the situation. Using this definition, black people can no longer see themselves as dupes, but have new insight into the moral righteousness that comes with being trusting.

Recently two social scientists operating from different political vantage points have come to the same definition of trust. Francis Fukuyama (1995) and Robert Putnam (1993) both see trust as social capital. The concept of social capital was developed by James Coleman (1988) who defines it as being the ability of people to work together in groups and organizations for a common purpose. Social capital is intrinsically linked to the economic idea of human capital which depends heavily on the knowledge and skill of human beings. In order for people to work well together and utilize their knowledge and skills, they must have in common many of the same norms and values. Out of these shared values comes trust.

Fukuyama, like Poussaint, sees some disturbing trends in American society that is making it so individualistic that whatever sense of community and shared values and norms that are present are rapidly deteriorating. This is making it harder for us to trust and without trust social capital cannot exist. Putnam and Fukuyama see trust as being the shared expectations group members have regarding the importance of voluntarily subordinating individual interests to those of the larger group. Putnam (1993) stresses the need for voluntary cooperation between individuals, groups and corporations and says that voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that possesses a large amount of social capital. He says that coercive enforcement of obligations is not only expensive, but it also does nothing in furthering the concept of trust. How much is your word worth if someone has to make you keep it?

Orlando Patterson (1996) defines trust as the "condition in which someone, the trustor, commits without security something to the care of another, the trustee, solely on the basis of the trustor's confidence or faith in the trustee's likelihood of fulfilling his obligation" (p. 3). But he also sees that relationships of trust are dependent upon social interactions. Common sense would have us to believe as Patterson (also Putnam and Fukuyama) states:

> We are more likely to trust persons with whom we have interacted, and in the absence of such interactions, we rely on information about the persons with whom we come in contact in deciding whether to trust them or not. Segregation minimizes the interaction between black and white persons; and the information about each other is likely to be distorted by beliefs about race and class. (p.4)

Keeping this fundamental truth in mind as we think about blacks, whites, the media and trust, it becomes clear that in order to establish interracial trust we must first begin an interracial dialogue.

Black people and white people distrust each other as a whole. But on an individual level, many blacks and whites would agree that they have friends who are of the other race. So why does this individual level trust not transfer itself to the group level? Why do these same people who may have a friend of a different race on the whole distrust that same race? The media play a crucial role in answering these types of questions. Hall (1990) identifies three "base-images of the 'grammar of race'" used by the media on a daily basis regarding black people:

> (1) There is, for example, the familiar slave-figure: dependable, loving in a simple, childlike way -- the devoted 'Mammy' with the rolling eyes, or the faithful fieldhand or retainer, attached and devoted to 'his' Master. ... A deep and unconscious ambivalence pervades this stereotype. Devoted and childlike, the 'slave' is also unreliable, unpredictable and undependable -- capable of 'turning nasty', or of plotting in a treacherous way, secretive, cunning, cut-throat once his or her Master's or Mistress's back is turned.
> (2) Another base-image is that of the 'native'. The good side of this figure is portrayed in a certain primitive nobility and simple dignity. The bad side is portrayed in terms of cheating and cunning, and, further out, savagery and barbarism.
> (3) A third variant is that of the 'clown' or 'entertainer'. This captures the 'innate' humour, as well as the physical grace of the licensed entertainer -- putting on a show for the Others. It is never quite clear whether we are laughing with or at this figure; admiring the physical and rhythmic grace, the open expressivity and emotionality of the 'entertainer', or put off by the 'clown's' stupidity. (p. 15-16)

It is media repetition of these images that allow whites to see their black friends as exceptions to the rule and to continue to group all unknown blacks into one big homogenous group.

The Case: Susan Smith and the Media

On Oct. 28, the first stories about Susan Smith and her kidnapped children ran in the New York Times (NYT) and Washington Post (WP). The NYT story did not mention race until the fourteenth paragraph when it gave Smith's description of the man who assaulted her. The previous paragraph states, "A composite drawing of the carjacker has been circulated in the South and several East Coast states, but it is vague and, according to volunteers who helped look for the children, could be anyone" (Bragg, 1994, p. 22). Although, the NYT and WP never printed the sketch, the vagueness of the drawing did not stop other newspapers across the country or television newscasts from displaying it almost nightly until Smith confessed on Nov. 4.

But there is evidence that either the public is becoming less trusting of media accounts of race-related stories or Smith just was not believable because as early as Oct. 30 in both the NYT and the WP there were reports of Smith allegedly failing lie detector tests. But, nonetheless, there was a racial tension running through black and white communities. Mediated racial cases such as the Boston Stuart murder, Rodney King's beating, Reginald Denny's beating, Tawana Brawley's hoax (Brawley is a young black girl who, in 1987, lied and said that six white men kidnapped and raped her) were still fresh in people's minds. Still, as William Raspberry said in a Washington Post editorial after Smith's arrest -- "in America, an accusation against a white man is still pretty much an accusation against a white man; an accusation against a black man -- particularly an accusation involving the sort of brutishness that already has too many white people fearful of us -- can seem an accusation against black men" (emphasis added, Nov. 9, 1994, p. A19).

Berry (1994) says that "the mediated and social images of Black males in this country are steeped in a powerfully negative ideology of violence, irresponsibility, and hopelessness" (p. 15). She says that the media present statistics of black males that emphasize the negative:

> 1/4 of Black males between the ages of 20 and 29 are in jail, on parole or on probation, young Black males have a 1 in 30 chance of dying before the age of 21 at the hands of another young Black male, and 4 out of 10 Blacks males are unemployed with the statistic for Black youth as high as 48%. These statistics represent alarming numbers, but they also de-emphasize the more positive side of 3/4 of Black males between 20 and 29 are not associated with the criminal system, 19 out of 20 Black men do have the chance to live past the age of 21, and six out of ten Black American males are employed in some capacity. (p. 15).

Even the fact that blacks supposedly commit more crimes is not a fact. Berry cites the 1987 National Crime Survey as reporting that 66 percent of assailants were white in reported incidents of violent crime; blacks made up 26.3 percent and 7.7 percent of the assailants were listed as other or unknown (p. 15). So why was it so natural for Smith to choose a black man as the culprit?

Natural Choice in the Media

Kastor writes in the WP on Nov. 5, 1994, that "Smith knew, consciously or not, that in a country tense with fear and foreboding, such a story would find an audience, just as Charles Stuart knew in 1989 that the people and police of Boston would be all too ready to believe a black man shot and killed his pregnant wife" (p. A1). The next paragraph quotes a black professor of law and psychology, Charles P. Ewing as saying, "In a sense, it's the bogeyman. It plays on the fears of the public and the racism that fuels fear of crime in this country. The idea that a black carjacker would take off with these two little white kids -- why not just wear a sign on your back saying, 'I'm the guy who did it'? It's preposterous, but people wanted to believe" (p. A1). But the story about race ends at this paragraph and flows back into a story of how we fear for the evil that may harm our children. Race and racism was acknowledged and dismissed. This is a pattern that is repeated again and again in the NYT and WP.

The overshadowing fact of the case is that when a white woman is legitimized on national television on such reputable shows as "Good Morning America;" NBC's "Today" show, and CBS's "This Morning." Then who are we to doubt her? This poor bereaved, distraught face that we see over our morning coffee as we prepare for work who is begging the black fiend to release her children is the image we take with us and that we discuss with our co-workers and families. Who will the audience believe -- dry newspaper accounts or dramatic emotional pleas live on television? Then after the lie is revealed when Oprah and Phil Donohue report from Union on race relations, blacks are repackaged yet again. This time blacks are not cast in the menacing image of vicious native gone bad, but as the familiar entertaining slave-figure who would never dream of turning against his master (Hall, 1990). It tells the public that Smith lied and blacks are still in there place and not thinking of hurting white people. In fact, according to the newspaper accounts, blacks are shocked and horrified at this accusation. "Mammy" and "Uncle Tom" would never hurt their master's children. Race is reappropriated and placed back on the back burner. But this is not creating trust. This creates a superiority complex -- which legitimates racism.

These accounts have not added to racial integrity between races nor has it healed the wound that Smith ripped open with her lie. But the way the media handled the account placed a tidy band-aide on the sore. The newspaper accounts after Smith confessed all play the same theme of how the black community let out a big sigh of relief, then inhaled a mouthful of righteous anger and indignation at being so foully accused. This became the news frame. A NYT article headlined "A Woman's False Accusation Pains Many Blacks," explains that "as racial hoaxes go, the lies Susan Smith told in

Union, S.C., about a black man stealing her two children were not novel or new, but they shot around the world anyway as the gospel truth spoken by a grieving mother" (Nov. 6, 1994, p. 32). The image of a black man as a merciless kidnapper who drove off with two white children despite their mother's pleas was accepted as **natural** by the public at large both black and white.

Howard Kurtz, a WP reporter, wrote an article on Nov. 5, 1994, entitled, "When Media Skepticism Is Left Behind." In this article he writes about how "many news organizations described Smith's charges almost as fact" (p. 11). This article and several others like it are themselves evidence of the duplicity of the media in its role as legitimator of the dominant. After the fact, the media looks back at its behavior and acknowledges race was a factor and we should have been more skeptical, yet Susan Smith lied to us and how could we have known? They acknowledge and dismiss their roles while turning the story onto its rightful path. Race relations became a little shaky, but look over here what this mother did -- she lied to us and killed her kids. After making this switch, all race stories were dismissed as being Smith's fault and the media focused their attention on the tragedy of a mother gone bad. The black community was left distrusting the media even more because they allowed the lie about them to circulate; and the white community was left glad that the black man did not do the crime this time, but no progress was made that checked the stereotype of the violent, black man who may harm us. Then the media (in their version of the bible, Editor & Publisher) congratulated themselves on a job well handled from a racial point of view (Timbs, Dec. 1994).

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KVUE-TV's "Crime Guidelines" and Unconscious Racism: A Case Study.

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KVUE-TV's "Crime Guidelines" and Unconscious Racism: A Case Study.

Abstract

This is a case study of KVUE-TV, Austin, Texas, during its first year employing written guidelines to determine whether or not a crime event is news.

The paper hypothesizes that because newsrooms frame events in the narrative of the dominant ideology (and are systemically, unconsciously racist without using guidelines), a crime guideline routine would work to structure unconscious racism, exacerbate the problem of racialized news coverage, and reveal the subjective quality of deciding what is news.

KVUE-TV's "Crime Guidelines" and Unconscious Racism: A Case Study.

This research looks at what appeared to be a breach of journalistic convention at KVUE-TV, Channel 24, Austin, Texas, and how it affected news selection and coverage.

On Monday, January 22, 1996, KVUE-TV began what it termed "a six-week experiment" using five "crime guidelines" as the arbiter of crime news. The guidelines are a written set of rules conjured by management intended to "help" KVUE-TV assignment editors, producers, and reporters decide whether or not a crime event was news. Simply put, if the crime event did not fit the guideline, it was not news. On its face it appears a reasonable notion given the public outcry of too much violence on television. The "crime guidelines" are:

- Does action need to be taken?
- Is there an immediate threat to safety?
- Is there a threat to children?
- Does the crime have significant community impact?
- Does the story lend itself to a crime prevention effort?

This study used two methodological frames with which to examine the KVUE-TV "crime guidelines:" (a.) an empiricist based coding model, and (b.) a theoretically based case study model emphasizing the ideological and social construction of race. Even though each method emerges from different traditions, their ultimate answers are complementary to this work. The goal, then, was to use these frames to help understand how news judgments were made at KVUE-TV and in media newsrooms in general, and how such judgments are inextricably linked to a conception of the "right" audience, which are, in turn, linked to unconscious considerations of race in capitalist ideology.

Empirical Findings

For he purposes of this study, crime news was considered homicide or murder stories. The work initially hypothesized that the introduction of "crime guidelines" in

KVUE-TV's newscasts may have five possible outcomes: 1. The amount of homicide news would remain the same, that is, the guidelines would have had no measurable effect; 2. There would be an immediate increase in homicide stories; 3. There would be a drop in local homicide stories, and the levels would stay low; 4. There would be a short-term drop in local homicide stories, but over time the homicide story-count would return to pre-guideline levels or higher; and 5. There would be a slow decline in local homicide stories over the long term.

It is clear the collected data do not show dramatic results in coverage after the guidelines were introduced (see endnotes and/or Table 6 following endnotes.) It appears that there was a slight increase in homicide stories in 1996, however, slightly more newscasts were sampled for 1996 than 1995. To have a reliable, valid sample that could track the impact of "crime guidelines" on local homicide stories, this study would need to examine news programming over a longer period of time. A number of data points would have to chosen before and after the introduction of "crime guidelines," over the course of several years. These data could then be analyzed by using a simple interrupted time series design. For a discussion of interrupted time series design see Cook and Campbell (1979, pp. 209-213).

Based on this limited data, it does not appear there was any meaningful change in the racial mix of stories both pre and post the introduction of "crime guidelines," nor is there any evidence to suggest that KVUE-TV's homicide coverage changed significantly with the institution of the guidelines.

That does not mean, however, that the introduction of "crime guidelines" at KVUE-TV did not have a powerful impact on the way news events were determined and how stories were selected and presented. Clearly, a limited study such as this produces limited empirical results. But, by using the case study method as well, four significant story selections were examined during KVUE-TVs first full year practicing this new convention. What the case study data suggests is a pattern of structural, unconscious racism at work in the KVUE-TV newsroom that was exacerbated by the introduction of "crime guidelines."

Methodology[1]

To conduct both the empirical and theoretical research, two trips to Austin were required for data collection: once on January 2-10, 1997, and again in July 12-26, 1997. During visit one, a total of 38 interviews were recorded on audiotape, each approximately 60 minutes in length. During visit two, 12 days were spent at the Austin History Center Video Archives, finding, viewing, and coding roughly 111 hours of videotape from KVUE-TV's 10 p.m. Monday-Friday newscasts starting January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996. When possible, the tapes were selected and viewed sequentially. Only weekday 10 p.m. newscasts were studied, no weekends. Since placement of stories and amount of time given to each story suggest its relative importance (Hausman, 1992) only the first 12 to 15 minutes of each newscast was viewed. This is also where most "hard" crime news and the perceived "important stories" are usually placed (Iyengar and Kinder, 1983). Results may be found in endnotes.

In addition, the author has worked in the broadcast industry for more than thirty years, ten of which were spent in local TV newsrooms in Ohio and Florida, and as a Los Angeles feature reporter, movie reviewer, and producer. This study, then, combines the limited techniques of in-depth interviews, the review and coding of videotapes, and personal observation drawing upon "insider" experience.

Focus Groups[2]

KVUE-TV management claimed the "crime guideline" change was made in response to viewer preferences for news coverage. However, it appears the change was driven by competitive and economic considerations as well. In order to foster a "quality" viewing audience, KVUE-TV had to give the "right" audience -- i.e., its primarily white, suburban "customers" -- what they wanted to see (or, in this case, what they did not want to see) in newscasts or face the prospect of losing an upscale audience to its competitors.

How does a TV station reckon what the "right" audience wants to see as news? It asks them. KVUE-TV brought together a small sample of viewers (usually eight to ten), whom they felt represented their target audience. By using these focus groups, KVUE-TV tried to identify the "right" audience segment for its advertisers. In general, the most desirable of the "right" audience segments "usually means affluent consumers eighteen to forty-nine years of age -- the heavy buying years -- with above median family income" (Bagdikian, 1992, p. 109).

The Austin Advertising Market[3]

KVUE-TV's incentive to research and reach the "right" audience and cater to the news perceptions of the central Texas television market was powerful because of the sizable amount of money Austin businesses spend on local TV advertising. Austin advertisers, according to the Standard Rate and Data Service's Claritas/Ad Audit (1997), spent approximately $185 million on television advertising in 1996. With so much money at stake, KVUE-TV clearly was inspired to find ways to target its audience by tailoring the content of its newscasts. (See Figure 1, following endnotes.)

This conscious segmentation of the economically elite from the total audience is standard operating procedure in television. Often, content changes in local television news are accompanied by changes in promotion strategy, on-air graphics and set design, and changes in news anchors, reporters, and other staff adjustments. Each new organizational move by television management is carefully considered for its ability to attract the optimum "right" audience and maximize advertising revenues for the station.

As Schudson (1996) has observed, "There are serious defects in American journalism, and many of them can be traced to the profit motive" (p. 4). Some argue that *all* of them, certainly in electronic journalism, can be traced to the profit motive. KVUE-TV's attempt to codify its crime coverage in an attempt to market its news to the "right" audience provides an excellent window on the inner workings of the medium that may help illuminate the scope of television's problem as well as its intractability

What is News?

How do news directors, editors, producers and reporters determine local news? Why is one story "news" and another "not news?" What power do ideologic and commercial stresses exert on local TV news story selection? What competitive marketing pressures weigh on news selection and presentation? Other media scholars have asked and answered such questions. Schudson (1978), for example, discuses at length the "slippery" concepts of bias and journalistic objectivity. More recently, Mindich (1998) explained that the unbiased notion of objectivity has all but been "abandoned by practically everyone outside [of] newsrooms" (p. 5). Stephens (1988) adds:

> A bias . . . appears the moment the flow of life is broken down into discrete "events," those events in turn broken down into discrete "facts," and a few of the infinite number of possible facts singled out as sufficiently compelling to be newsworthy. Additional subjective distinctions inevitably are injected with each new attempt to narrow the focus and impose organization. (p. 264)

Shoemaker and Reese (1996), Gans (1980), Tuchman (1978), and Bennett (1996) each examine the commercial, organizational, ideological, and political structures that shape editorial decisions, and Efron (1971) suggests that the source of news bias is the editorial selection process itself. What to include or exclude (i.e., what is "news" and what is "not news") says Efron, is the "essence of a news operation" (pp. 6-19). News gathering, she explains, requires “standards of selectivity” and “implicit or explicit value-guides which tell the racing reporter what is 'important,' 'significant,' 'central,' 'essential'" (p. 9). Efron (1971) says if a reporter had to stop to interpret each event in terms of its potential news value, the reporter would be struck "mentally paralyzed and unable to work" (p. 9).

The "hierarchy of values" that determines news, as Efron (1971) suggests, are hardly "objective" criteria. These "news values," as noted by McAdams & Elliott (1996, pp. 44-70) are found in stories that feature prominence, timeliness, proximity (either geographic or psychological), impact (i.e., how many? how much?), magnitude (i.e., death, injury, loss of property), conflict, oddity, and emotional power (i.e., human interest/universal appeal stories.) Essentially, each is a content category of "news." These are the gauges designed to attract and hold the attention of a mass audience. If a reporter or editor interprets an event as falling outside a given category, the event is simply considered "not news." However, McCombs (1979) writes that selecting content categories to determine news is not exactly how it is done. "The reporters' and editors' bias, ambitions, [perceptions of their audience], and estimations of the [media owners' political and personal] feelings all enter into news judgment . . .and sometimes, the definition is even bent a little" (McCombs, 1979, p.82). In KVUE-TV's "crime guideline" case, what appeared to drive news values are not only the above notions, but also its relentless hunt for the “right” audience to repackage and sell to advertisers for profit.

"Crime Guidelines" as Solution?

Clearly, the selection of events considered "news" and the writing of news is deeply flawed. This flawed news production process conflated with the overt drive to secure the "right" audience undermined the good intentions of the KVUE-TV staff when it developed its guidelines for reporting crime news. The reason can be simply put: These guidelines were developed in the same flawed environment that has produced conventional news judgments like that of objectivity, which claims to report the "facts" entirely dispassionately, evenhandedly, and without bias -- to threat them like *objects*.

Appealing to the "right" audience is by its nature a process of discrimination, a conscious function of separating (or targeting) audiences not only by age and gender but also by moneyed class. Such class discrimination, it has been argued, is *de facto* racism at work. Scholars from various theoretical and methodological traditions have determined that racism is ubiquitous in the culture of the United States, and it is inescapable in commercial broadcasting. This unseen evil is what Entman (1990) calls "contemporary racism;" Essed (1991) terms "everyday racism;" McConahay (1986) describes as "modern racism;" and is alternately identified as "symbolic racism" by Sears (1988); "enlightened racism" by Jhally and Lewis (1992); and "nonracist racism" by Fiske (1994). Each term labels the same problem -- that of unconscious racism -- built into the very structure of capitalist societies.

This paper argues that while KVUE-TV labored to satisfy the desires of its perceived “right” audience by installing "crime guidelines," it, in fact, worked to imperceptibly, unconsciously, and unintentionally codify racism within an already fundamentally flawed system of news judgment.

Austin Television: A Market in Transition[4]

There was an extraordinary amount of market flux during the 24 months prior to KVUE-TV’s adoption of "crime guidelines." A number of KVUE-TV's competitors changed ownership and newly repacked newscasts were jockeying for higher ratings and a bigger share of the advertising pie.[5]

Of all the new stations Granite Broadcasting Company's KEYE-TV[6] was consciously targeting the new thirty-something move-ins to the Austin area. A new television audience is perceived to have little or no emotional or habitual ties to the other established stations. By presenting what some detractors have called “flash and trash” news -- complete with glitzy, high-tech sets, exciting computer graphics, attractive anchors, and an abundance of rapid-fire stories (some items going less than 10 seconds each) -- KEYE-TV was slowly making a name for itself. It was (and still is) a tabloid-style news show the likes of which Austin television had never seen, and it continues to make inroads in the advertiser coveted demographic: women 18-34.

One notable on-air promotion for market upstart KEYE-TV: To attract viewers to its various daily newscasts KEYE-TV gave away a new home worth nearly $250,000.[7] It became clear that the Austin television market was shifting. It would only be a matter of time before KVUE-TV might lose its number one rating (and subsequent high ad revenues) if something was not done to up-date the image of its news product. (See Table 3, following endnotes.)

KVUE-TV Repositions

KVUE-TV, the established Austin television news outlet, began a repositioning effort to fight its competitor's flanking move. KVUE-TV convened focus groups the results of which convinced management to implement the notion of "crime guidelines," i.e., to codify crime news coverage.

According to newsroom interviews conducted from January 2 - 9, 1997, both KVUE-TV and the NBC affiliate KXAN-TV are said to have "reacted" to KEYE-TV's new "news presence" by adding more interesting on-air production, including "flashier" computer-generated graphics, and a palpable accelerated pace and story count during the 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts (Godlis, personal communication, December 9, 1996).

On Monday, January 22, 1996, one week before the February ratings sweeps, KVUE-TV embarked on its six-week "experiment" to limit coverage of violent crime. The KVUE-TV "Crime Project," as it was called, attracted worldwide journalistic attention. Positive newspaper and magazine articles were written about the concept, trade papers lauded it, academic journals investigated it, graduate students did theses and dissertations on it, international TV journalists visited KVUE-TV's Austin studios to inquire about the crime project, the station was even featured on ABC-TV *Nightline with Ted Koppel.*[8]

But most important to KVUE-TV, the targeted "right" audience liked the idea of "crime guidelines." This extraordinary interest in a concept that sought to fundamentally change the content of news made it clear that the public, scholars, and news practitioners themselves felt something was very wrong with the current system. Clearly, KVUE-TV thought it had invented a way to correct it.

The "Crime Guidelines" in Use[9]

The KVUE-TV "crime guidelines" went into effect on Monday, January 22, 1996, a few days before the Austin television market's February audience ratings measurement. KVUE-TV assignment editors, producers, and reporters now had to determine the news value of a given crime story by consulting these guidelines. If the crime did not fit a guideline, it would not be broadcast. (See Tables 5 and 6 following endnotes.)

KVUE-TV news anchors, then Judy Maggio and Bob Karstens, explained the "crime guidelines" concept and philosophy to viewers during both the 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts. Public response was mostly positive. According to Dianne Holloway, television editor at the *Austin American-Statesman:*

> The reason [KVUE-TV] did the crime guidelines idea is [because] they had done focus groups and they pretty much knew how it would be received. They knew how the town would react. It was received very well. Of course there are some people who saw it as limiting news, other journalists for example, as well as KVUE's competing stations, and hard-core news junkies that don't like a policy that automatically cuts out certain portions of the news. But, for the most part their crime guidelines idea was very warmly embraced by Austin viewers. (Personal communication, January 5, 1997.)

To demonstrate how the guidelines worked in practice, and as the centerpiece of this case study, this research looks at four major crime events which occurred during the first year of the KVUE-TV crime project: The Elgin triple murder, the Asian family double murder/suicide, the Motorola killings, and the Zilker Park murder.

The Elgin Triple Murder[10]

Two weeks after the "crime guidelines" were in place, a triple murder occurred in Elgin, Texas, a rural town of 5,500 people, situated about 20 miles southeast of Austin. Newspaper accounts of the killings identified the slain men as Geraldo Fernandez Lares, 25; his cousin, Ubaldo Sanches, 19; and a friend, Aristeo Marquez Jinojosa, 19. The trio were Mexican citizens from the state of central Zacatecas, but lived temporarily in Austin working construction or landscaping jobs. Witnesses told police that the three had been drinking with a group of people at the El Tenampa, an Elgin bar, and eventually moved the party to a house off U.S. Route 290 where an argument ensued. Police received the call at 1:24 a.m., Sunday, February 4, 1996, and, upon investigation, found three bodies, one shot five times, one shot three times, and one shot twice. It was the first time the small community had ever experienced a triple homicide. KVUE-TV chose not to broadcast a story of this crime because its news managers decided the event did not fit the "crime guidelines," although a news crew was dispatched to the scene and, the station says, the story was investigated for two days.

"We tried everything," said Robbie Owens, the KVUE-TV reporter assigned to the story (Rosenbloom, 1996, p. 5). "We thought if we could turn [the story] on its head, maybe we could make [it] fit the guidelines. But it just didn't, and I'm very proud of the station for sticking to its guns" (Rosenbloom, 1996, p. 5). Kneeland explained that the only people who seemed to be upset were other journalists and that no KVUE-TV viewers complained. "We went out [to Elgin] two days in a row and spent considerable time, but we couldn't establish any of the things we've been talking about. There was no immediate threat to children, because no children were involved. There was no action to be taken, because the police said these guys had killed themselves, playing with guns while getting rip-roaring drunk on a Saturday night. We thought maybe there would be a significant community impact, so we interviewed hundreds of people out there, but nobody even knew these guys. And finally, there was no crime prevention effort, and none was contemplated. The story was "weird" but "weird" isn't a guideline" (personal communication, January 6, 1997).

However, two other television news directors in Austin disagreed. Bruce Whitacre of KXAN-TV, Channel 36 said:

> I felt it *was* a big deal. How many murders does Elgin get? Not many, and then they get three in a row. I think that has a significant community impact. And if there's a deeper issue beyond the spot news that might warrant a follow-up, how can you do the follow-up without reporting the murders in the first place? It's clear these so-called guidelines are just a ratings ploy, a gimmick. And [Channel] 24 has beaten it to death. (Personal communication, February 3, 1997.)

KEYE-TV's Godlis was the most critical of the KVUE-TV non-coverage decision, saying:

> The murders were a topic of conversation, and that's enough to warrant reporting them. A story doesn't have to directly impact people's lives in Austin before it's reported. News is also what you talk about to your friends and neighbors. I don't believe in censoring, so it comes down to presentation and taste. Our crime coverage policy is the same as it is for politics and features. If it matters to Austin viewers and we can make it relevant and interesting, we cover it. (Personal communication, December 19, 1996.)

The Asian Family Double Murder-Suicide[11]

The next test for the KVUE-TV "crime guidelines" happened the morning of Sunday, February 25, 1996. The University of Texas Police Department responded to a 911 call of a shooting at the University of Texas' married student housing complex on

West Sixth Street. Dead were an Asian family -- a husband and wife, both 41, and their four-year-old daughter -- an apparent double murder-suicide. The police identified the husband as the shooter and suicide victim. The grisly occurrence took place at approximately 9:30 a.m.

The crime event happened on an early Sunday morning, and there were no scheduled newscasts on KVUE-TV that day until 5:30 p.m. This gave the KVUE-TV newsroom ample time to make a crime guideline determination, gather facts, get video footage, and produce a complete story in time for their first scheduled newscast. The videotape of the KVUE-TV 5:30 p.m. news broadcast on Sunday, February 25, 1996 revealed the first-segment story run-down as:

Lead story: Middle-class wages are not keeping up with the economy.
2nd. story: Cuba shoots down airplane.
3rd. story: U.S. Pacific Fleet grounded.
4th. story: Another bombing in Israel.
5th. story: Cablevision takeover.
6th. story: Students and excel grants.

There was no mention of the University of Texas Asian family killing that Sunday afternoon on KVUE-TV. Videotapes show that rival KEYE-TV, on the other hand, lead its 5:30 p.m. broadcast with the story, following it with a side-bar on the domestic abuse hot line (1996, 25 February).

One might conclude that the University of Texas Asian family killing was not reported simply because it did not fit the KVUE-TV guidelines -- much like the Mexican triple murder in the central Texas town of Elgin was not considered news. But a curious thing happened: later that evening, KVUE-TV lead its 10 p.m. broadcast with the University of Texas Asian family killing but made no mention of the "crime guidelines" (1996, 25 February). The crime guideline computer graphic usually used before each crime story since January 22, 1996 was not shown and the crime guideline used to determine this story as worthy of KVUE-TV coverage was not mentioned (1996, 25 February). The story proceeded for one minute and 35 seconds as a regular "spot" news story (KVUE-TV newscast, 1996, 25 February). Moreover, the second story of that broadcast, another crime story about a shot-gun killing in East Austin, which received two minutes and 25 seconds of air time, was also not preceded by the "crime guidelines" graphic or any reference to the crime project (KVUE-TV newscast, 1996, 25 February). Still more puzzling, later in the newscast KVUE-TV reporter Fred Cantu was featured in a news promo touting the "crime guidelines" and thanking viewers for their mostly positive faxes, letter, and e-mails (1996, 25 February).

The video used for the KVUE-TV University of Texas Asian family killing story broadcast at 10 p.m. was gathered earlier that morning outside the graduate student's housing complex. KVUE-TV had sent reporter Greg Croogan and videographer Chris Davis to the scene to gather video footage and information when the assignment desk first received word of the crime. KVUE-TV news producers simply chose not to use the story on the earlier 5:30 p.m. broadcast.

One may speculate as to why the University of Texas Asian family killing story was not even mentioned on KVUE-TV at 5:30 p.m. but became the lead story five and one half hours later.

The Motorola Plant Killings[12]

The lives of Linda and David Wayne Stone -- a white, middle-class couple -- ended on November 26, 1996. The drama began in the parking lot of the suburban Oak Hill Motorola electronics plant, Austin's largest private employer (6,000 people).. It is at this facility Motorola designs, manufacturers, and tests semiconductor chips for use in cell telephones and computers. Linda Stone, a testing division employee, was on Thanksgiving vacation when she drove to the plant to visit her colleagues on morning break. Stone returned to her car in the visitors parking area about 10 a.m. where she was confronted by her husband, David Stone, who also worked at Motorola in the plant's shipping department. Investigators said an argument ensued and Stone fired six shots at his wife with a .357 caliber handgun, hitting her in the head and torso. He then sped away in a rented Ford Taurus automobile. One hour and 50 minutes later, as police converged on Stone standing in an open field just two miles from the plant, he fired the .357 magnum into the right side of his head, killing himself.

This occurrence met the KVUE-TV guidelines as crime of "significant community impact" (KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscast, 1996, 26 November) and was broadcast. On this story KVUE-TV provided what they called "team coverage," i.e., several reporters assigned to cover different aspects of the same story (KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscast, 1996, 26 November).

When asked about an emerging racial pattern: non-coverage of the Mexican/Elgin triple murder, late coverage on the Asian family double murder/suicide, yet extensive coverage of the white, middle-class murder/suicide that happened in a white Austin suburb, McFeaters said:

> Some of our competitors and others have raised the question of racism and they've done that several times. Well, I can only tell you, we're not racist, so I don't know

> what they mean. I guess you'll have to ask them. I can tell you there is not a conscious racism that I'm aware of in the newsroom. And even if there was I'm certainly not going to sit here and say, "Oh, yeah there's a conspiracy we have here against minorities." (Personal communication, February 3, 1997.)

The Zilker Park Murder[13]

Late Tuesday evening, December 3, 1996, at Austin's sprawling 349-acre Zilker Park, as city workers decorated trees with lights for the coming Christmas season, Roberto Benitez Giral was shot to death. The single .38 caliber bullet entered through the right side of his face near the chin. Although Martha Hernandez, Giral's estranged wife, told police that robbers had shot her husband, it was later discovered that Hernandez had, in fact, agreed to pay three teenagers $1,000 to assassinate him.

Zilker Park is the site of the celebrated Zilker Christmas Tree and the festive "trail of lights" which draws tens of thousands of visitors for the holidays. Still, KVUE-TV determined this event did not fit the "crime guidelines" and it was not reported. Why? KVUE-TV's Kneeland characterized it as " a private, single case. . . In our judgment, it was just the right thing to do" (personal communication, January 8, 1997).

KEYE-TV's Godlis, did not agree pointing out that if [the victim] "was a cheerleader from Westlake High School, which is the ritzy, all-white high school, [KVUE-TV] would have put that story on in a heartbeat" (personal communication, January 9, 1997).

Holloway at the *Austin American-Statesman* also suggested there might be a racial bias:

> Do you see a pattern in what they covered and what they didn't cover? I would raise the question of racism. . . . I called Carole when they decided not to do the Elgin shootings and her quote to me was, "These were Mexican nationals and no one in the community cares." Well, it depends upon what community your talking about, and who you're talking to, doesn't it? I mean, if you're talkin' to white people or a buncha

> Bubbas in Elgin, I doubt they cared, but the community's more than that. And the fact that they said they didn't cover the Zilker Park story because it was a private, domestic violence case doesn't wash, because they covered the Motorola shooting -- which was also domestic violence. The difference is: One couple was white, one was not. One murder was at a park in the middle of a city; one was at a big employer's parking lot. I say there's a pattern there and a disturbing pattern at that. I just find any sort of managed news, which is what this kind of thing is, very disturbing. I really don't think it's the same kind of thing as sitting in a news meeting reviewing your policies of what you cover or what you don't cover . . . or taking each story on its individual merit. I think to create news categories is not a manageable system and it has a bad overall impact. (Personal communication, January 5, 1997.)

The KVUE-TV's noncoverage of the Zilker Park murder became a flash point for Godlis and the KEYE-TV news organization. Promos were hastily produced and put on the air the day after the Zilker incident, featuring KEYE-TV's lead anchor, Neal Spelce,[14] the "most highly respected television journalist in the market. . . . [T]he Walter Cronkite' of Austin TV news" (Godlis, personal communication, January 9, 1997). Spelce, in the KEYE-TV news ad, implied that the public simply cannot trust a television station that "filters news and omits reports" (Godlis, personal communication, December 6, 1996). The promo concludes by asking, "Is your newscast giving you all the news?" (Godlis, personal communication, December 6, 1996). For weeks the controversy continued to be fought in TV ads and the daily newspaper's "letters" column.

Discussion and Conclusions

On the surface, "crime guidelines" appear as a significant shift in both news convention as well as the presentation of crime on local television. KXAN-TV news director Bruce Whitacre didn't agree, saying, "KVUE has beaten this idea to death in their on-air promotion. It's a ploy, a simple ratings ploy" (personal communication, February 3, 1997). Indeed, a television trade magazine, *Broadcasting and Cable*, reported: The decision to implement "crime guidelines" was affected by a competitor's change in ownership and its new network affiliation. Carole Kneeland [vice president of news for KVUE-TV] says that when former FOX affiliate KEYE-TV was bought by New York-based Granite Broadcasting Corp., and affiliated with CBS, she was concerned that KEYE-TV's news might reflect its owner's big city roots. "We started talking about how we could distinguish ourselves from the other guys, and make sure viewers know we are taking the high road on this." (Katz, 1996 October 7, p.55) Kneeland admitted in another magazine article that the "crime guidelines" were a part of a marketing strategy, but she said, "That's not why we are doing it, but that's certainly part of it I felt that some people would appreciate this and would watch us because of it" (Holley, 1996 May/June, p. 29).

There is little doubt that KVUE-TV has distinguished itself in local television news with its "crime guidelines," but at what cost? After reviewing the four cases presented, one may ask: Did the KVUE-TV "crime guidelines" unintentionally codify the racism that is inherent in news selection and presentation without the use of guidelines? Research suggests that the ideologies of racism are dominant, systemic, and structural throughout society -- conditions not problematized by newsworkers. Fiske (1994) explained:

> It is not enough to say that . . . race and class mix differently in different conditions: we must recognize that racial difference is strategically constructed, in part by economic power, and equally that class privilege is colored. Race and class are not separate power axis that can be applied together or separately, but racial power can be exerted along class lines and class power along racial ones. . . . Class is better conceived as a scale of privilege that is primarily, but not exclusively economic, and that has objective and subjective dimensions that may coincide more or less closely. . . . The prime functions of class are first to establish social distinctions and then to hierarchize them. (p. 65- 66)

Currently there is a widespread acknowledgment of the crucial role of social institutions in reflecting, producing, and sustaining inequalities in capitalistic societies. The emphasis is on how racism is rooted in society's institutional structures and not how it might be manifested in an individual's attitudes, although structural arrangements work dynamically to reinforce other social or psychosocial practices (Knowels and Prewitt, 1969; Jones, 1972; Wilson, 1973; Bonacich, 1972.)

However, this structural approach has its limitations. Simpson and Yinger (1972) point out that not all prejudice can be explained by structural variables alone; an individual's response to group influence is conditioned by a range of psychological and personality factors, so there is a dialectic between the concept of a social structure of society and attitudinal variables brought by each individual actor. Essed (1991) argues both should be integrated into a framework she terms "everyday racism"(p. 288). She writes that racism is not a permanent feature of society, but is instead reproduced out of a complex set of conditions. Essed's (1991) work describes newsworkers' perceptions of race and ethnicity and how such categories may influence the daily practice of news judgment: "[A] major feature of everyday racism is that it involves racist practices that infiltrate everyday life and become part of what is seen as 'normal' by the dominant group" (p. 288).

It is arguable that when KVUE-TV listened to and courted the desires of its white, middle-class audience -- its "right" audience -- and responded with crime news guidelines, it was practicing unconscious racism. Jhally and Lewis (1992) studied this class-race-media matrix, and wrote:

> Television's celebration of middle and upper middle class lifestyles is . . . allows a class-consciousness that separates them from the less sophisticated hordes beneath them. It is [this] "cultured" knowledge . . . that makes them conscious of their

> membership in a privileged class. You are included in the world, television tells these viewers, because you deserve to be. (p. 78)

Would not, then, a set of "crime guidelines" that grew out of such hidden ideologies add a kind of hierarchy to this invisible racism and, thereby, exacerbate the problem? Or, asking the question another way: Would the same stories have been considered "news" and broadcast by KVUE-TV if the guidelines were not in place? Without guidelines the newsworkers would have instead been guided by the standard, reflexive newsroom convention of recognizing sensational homicides as legitimate news, which was the very "problem" KVUE-TV said it was trying to mitigate with guidelines.

The fact that the other Austin stations with competing newscasts, KEYE-TV and KXAN-TV in particular, presented the exempted stories in a timely fashion, indicates to some that the current system "worked" and that KVUE-TV's tinkering with it was unnecessary and reckless. Those favoring the status quo argue that the reflexive actions of journalists, and their customary interpretation of certain crime events as news, are the very social mechanisms that KVUE-TV's "crime guidelines" short-circuited. The news traditionalists that were interviewed (Godlis, Holloway, Whitacre) warned if a mainstream media outlet ignores major racialized crime events, over time it may have to answer to public charges of racism. This is not, by any means, an endorsement of the present system. It just works to further illustrate the highly subjective nature of selecting events as news even if the news selection process is changed by formal structure.

Indeed, had KVUE-TV acted in the conventional fashion, it is arguable that the station could have been labeled racist because it aired the stories. It appears, therefore, that the "crime-is-news" reflex does not just influence story selection, it affects the way facts are arranged, how visuals are chosen, and the tone or frame of the narrative.

"Pictures in Our Heads"

Nearly 80 years ago Lippmann (1922/1960) argued that our opinions and behaviors are responses not to the world but to the "pictures in our heads" (p.13) that imperfectly shape our world and color our actions and feelings. In this way, says Lippmann (1922/1960) the news not only reinforces stereotypes but also depends upon them, and news media workers choose and write stories that coincide with ideas and beliefs held independently by their audience.

Gans (1980) similarly argues that the media cannot exercise news judgments concerning story accuracy and objectivity without drawing upon its own set of "reality judgments" (p. 201). Such judgments, he says, constitute the background understanding of society upon which a news story is chosen and built, and a journalist's efforts to accurately portray the subject matter of these stories depend not only upon the specific information gathered for a story, but also upon the popular understandings -- and misunderstandings -- held by the larger society. KVUE-TV essentially blocked its journalists' reflexive "reality judgment" and instead made them yield to a prefabricated, precalculated "meta-judgment." The decision the KVUE-TV journalists faced was not only determining if the crime event itself was news, but if it was news as seen through a management and marketing structure which conformed to KVUE-TV's advertisers "right" audience needs.

KVUE-TV's "Unconscious" Racism

Again, this research does not argue that the newsworkers or management at KVUE-TV are consciously, overtly racist. Everyone interviewed in the KVUE-TV newsroom denied any prejudice, bigotry, or discrimination -- of course, it would be an unfashionable bias to admit. Clearly, these journalists and news managers do not sense that they are involved by policy or practice in any organized, conscious effort to advance racism. Throughout this paper the argument has been that an *unconscious* racism was at play when news managers decided not to air the three of four highlighted stories, a racism that was aggravated by the guidelines. By trying to respond to the desires of the "right" elite audience (of which KVUE-TV news manager, editors, reporters, and anchors are also a part), KVUE-TV exposed the racism inherent in both the newsroom and its targeted white, middle-class audience. Ironically, had KVUE-TV not used "crime guidelines" to determine the newsworthiness of events, the racism intrinsic to its newsroom would have stayed hidden and would have never been problematized. By employing guidelines and revealing to the audience how the KVUE-TV newsroom determined what events were news, KVUE-TV, in effect, exposed the dirty little secret that news is a social construction. It becomes clear to critical viewers that choosing the news of the day is not only highly subjective but also exclusionary, situational, most often based on stereotypes, and is totally "right" audience-driven.

Paletz and Entman (1982) explain that profound, yet unconscious, elitist perceptions in the newsroom and in upper management work to color media routines that in turn alter news content and ultimately change its impact on the public. Any idea that threatens the economic bottom line must conform to this elitist notion or be jettisoned. The "crime guidelines," which grew out of competitive market pressures, viewer outreach sessions, and focus groups of the "right" audience, is conformative and compatible with elitist and bottom-line driven notions. Cirino (1972) is more direct in his view of the unspoken relationship between business and media. He says:

> To hide their role of serving the establishment, the agencies of mass media have used their propaganda tools to create in the public's mind myths about the media. . . . It is these myths which persuade people to accept a communication system prostituted to the special interests of a few. (p. 197)

Can we see KVUE-TV's "crime guidelines" as myth as well? The answer may be "yes" especially if one defines myth -- as Cirino seems to -- as a fiction or half-truth, especially if it forms part of an ideology. The KVUE-TV guidelines grew from the same ideological soil as all media routines and newsroom conventions, and most, if not all, media routines ultimately work to serve the business interests of the given media company. At first blush it appeared KVUE-TV actually developed a fresh system of news judgment that may change a powerful media convention: the reflexive use of crime events as significant news. But, as research suggests, the social structure of the United States newsroom is profoundly, unconsciously, and structurally racist, and that racism thrives within a discriminating, consumer targeted (i.e., "right" audience) advertiser driven system.

The locus of power in this study is local television itself, which produces an economic product (television news programs) that, inasmuch as it is a cultural/symbolic product, is a vehicle for the production of meaning by and for the dominant ideology. The marketing of KVUE-TV's "crime guidelines" is all about selling a commodity, a news product. The broad goal of this marketing is harvesting the "audience commodity" (Owen and Wildman, 1992; Smythe, 1994; Tuchman, 1978; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Webster and Phalen, 1994), those affluent "right" viewers, so as to gain the largest possible ad revenues, the lifeblood of the commercial television industry. A station must steal audience from its competitors in any way it can to be rated number one.

The significance of this event should not be overlooked since such a competitive, ratings-driven television station may not provide the quality news citizens need to make informed decisions and be able to participate in democracy. Christiano (1996) says, " . . . each citizen has the right . . . and duty to hear a wide spectrum of views on subjects of public concern" (p.3). If the spectrums of views are narrowly drawn to placate commercial interests, important voices and ideas may go unheard. Carey (1996) wrote:

> Journalism is not public relations . . . journalism is not media . . . [j]ournalism is another name for democracy or, better, you cannot have journalism without democracy. The practices of journalism are not self-justifying; rather, they are justified in terms of the social consequences they engender, namely the constitution of a democratic social order. (p. 9)

Competitive Pressures

What Kneeland et al. did at KVUE-TV was motivated by more than one circumstance. Kneeland was aware of the national trends showing a key audience cohort (35-55-year-old females) was fed-up with the monolithic, asymmetrical quality of media. This demo had identified the media as part of the problem with United States society, not part of the solution. Additionally, KVUE-TV's focus group research concurred with the national data demonstrating over and over that the "right" audience wanted to see a change in the way violent crime stories were covered on local television. Kneeland, also very aware that a new news competitor had come to town (i.e., up-start KEYE-TV), quickly recognized its rival's on-air product was being marketed aggressively and was packaged differently from the other local news shows. As noted, KEYE-TV's presentation was slick, fast-paced, and exciting; its packaging was glossy and very appealing to the new younger audience who were arriving daily with the business expansion of Austin; and its editorial emphasis was on crime news, whether local or imported. Kneeland saw a way for consumer product differentiation between the rival newscasts; she would position her station as the one which “listens” to the desires of the "right" audience and, by using a manifest set of guidelines, restrict or appear to restrict the showing of certain sensational crime news. KVUE-TV had the ballast of experience, a comfortable longevity in town, personable and high profile reporters and anchors, a perception by the old audience as being a "quality" news station, and top market ratings to validate it. KEYE-TV, however, invested nearly a million dollars into aggressive marketing and promotion (giving away, as noted, a near quarter of a million dollar new home) to focus attention on its newscasts. KEYE-TV’s appeal was to the new, yet-to-be-converted Austin news consumer with no history of the market or a hardened TV viewing habit. The KVUE-TV "crime guidelines" installation was, therefore, critical as a marketing tool so that audience and advertisers could distinguish the veteran station from its new challenger.

TV Business vs. TV News

Does this "we do the news you said you want to see" approach justify KVUE-TV’s "crime guidelines?" Do the guidelines truly change or in any way modify the current flawed system? The answer, obviously, is no. It is arguable that KVUE-TV’s "crime guidelines" worked to exacerbate a news structure built on unconscious racism using conventions and routines that serve "bottom line" station requirements. As noted, countless other scholars explained that the concept of objectivity is a form of journalistic ritual established long ago and is more a business and organizational function than a journalistic prerequisite. This hypersensitivity to content and presentation of news, works to alienate fewer media consumers and attract a greater segment of the "right" audience whose attention could be more easily sold (at confiscatory rates) to advertisers. Simply put, it is more profitable for the media to appear less biased and more objective. Therefore, if one is serious about changing such a flawed system one would first try to separate news from its commercial pressures, not more fervently commodify it, which is essentially what KVUE-TV did. By its use of formal and informal focus groups, KVUE-TV asked a very specific "right" audience what should be done to improve the news. What do these news viewers like or dislike? Of what kind of TV news would they like to see more? News, therefore, was treated as another mutable commodity, like soap powder or corn flakes. This narrow, bottom-line, "news as widget" paradigm sees citizens only as consumers and works to target a tightly focused "right" audience for private profit, not to reengage democracy or build community. But then, that is not the mission of a privately held media operation. Chomsky (1989) writes:

> It is a natural expectation . . . that the . . . media and other ideological institutions will generally reflect the perspectives and interests of established [control]. . . . The media serve the interests of . . . corporate power, framing [its] reporting and analysis in a manner supportive of established privilege and limiting debate and discussion accordingly. (p.10)

Should we be surprised at such local television behavior? Not at all. The marketing logic of the "crime guidelines" is quite sound. KVUE-TV wishes to have its "right" audience believe it offers a news presentation more attuned to what its target viewer said it wanted. McChesney calls this the paradox of oligopolistic marketing, that is, "the more products are alike the more promotion and marketing resources are used to convince people they're different" (personal communication, February 9, 1998).

Epilogue

On January 26, 1998, Carole Kneeland died of breast cancer. She was 50. Her "crime guidelines" legacy remains newsroom procedure at KVUE-TV, Austin.

Endnotes:

1. **Textual Research/Coding**. To get a better sense of KVUE-TV's news selection process, the first 12-15 minutes of 444 total newscasts (out of a possible 520) were viewed from 1995 and 1996. Only Monday through Friday, 10 p.m. newscasts were viewed, no weekends. I selected 210 KVUE-TV newscasts from 1995 -- one year before the crime guidelines -- and 234 newscasts from 1996 -- the first year the guidelines were in place. For 1995, 24 newscasts were so poor in video quality as to be unwatchable, and 26 were lost/missing or misplaced, reducing the sample to 210 tapes. Note: 1995 KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday - Friday, dates of tapes lost, unaccounted or unwatchable (i.e., poor video/audio): January 2, 16, 19, 30; February 3, 6, 10, 17; March 6, 13, 21, 22, 31; April 4, 14, 17, 27; May 10, 18, 19, 29; June 2, 12, 15, 22; July 3, 4, 14, 21; August 4, 21, 28, 30; September 11, 14, 15, 19; October 9, 10, 16, 23, 27; November 6, 17, 24, 27; December 15, 24, 25, 29.

For 1996, 10 newscasts were unwatchable, and 16 were lost/missing/misplaced, reducing the sample to 234 tapes. Coding was rudimentary. Note: 1996 KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday - Friday, list of dates of the tapes lost, unaccounted or unwatchable (i.e., poor video/audio): January 15, 26; February 5, 21, 29; March 4, 18; April 26, 29; May 6, 31; June 3, 7, 24; July 1, 22; August 15, 30; September 2, 4; October 4, 28; November 4, 18; December 24, 25.

There was one anomaly: On April 22, 1995, KVUE-TV went live via "Sky -Link" (the marketing term for "via satellite") to Oklahoma City and the site of the federal building explosion in which 168 people were killed. Crime guidelines were not in place at that time and the many dead were not counted as homicide victims in this study.

Of the 210 newscasts viewed from 1995, 184 contained coverage of all manner of violent death (i.e., includes homicide, auto accidents, fires, drive by shootings, terrorism.) From the tapes found and viewable, I noted that KVUE-TV went without homicide crime coverage in 1995 for 26 days. Some of these "crime free" days were consecutive, most were spread out over the course of the year. Note: 1995 KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday - Friday, dates of broadcasts without crime news: January 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 20; February 1, 2, 8, 9,15, 23; March 3; July 13, 25; September 17, 18, 24, 25; October 11, 12; November 9, 10; December 5.

The local homicide stories KVUE-TV covered were from East Austin (63 stories), Austin (46 stories), and elsewhere in Travis County (11 stories) -- the county in which Austin resides. East Austin is the poorer side of town where a large concentration of African-Americans and Hispanics reside. Other reported homicide stories came from: Bastrop County (2), Caldwell County (2), Hayes County (2), and Williamson County (4). The other seven countries into which KVUE-TV broadcasts a viewable signal -- Burnett, Llamo, Mason, Gillespie, Lee, Fayette, and Blanco -- generated no homicide stories. KVUE-TV broadcast a total of 28 national or international homicide stories from imported sources (13 from ABC network satellite feeds), the remaining (15) were Texas regional homicide stories delivered by intrastate microwave feeds. I was only looking at local homicide coverage by KVUE-TV in 1995 without regional or national stories and without inclusion of days without crime coverage. Therefore, my true total of 1995 newscasts viewed with local homicide coverage was 130 stories.

In 1996, of the 234 tapes viewed, 216 contained coverage of violent death. From the tapes found and viewable in 1996, I again noted that KVUE-TV went without homicide coverage, this time for 18 days. Some "crime free" days were consecutive as in 1995, and most were spread out over the course of the year. Note: 1996 KVUE-TV 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday - Friday, dates of broadcasts without crime news: January 2, 23, 24; February 6, 20, 7; April 24, 25; June 27; July 2, 15, 16; September 23, 24; October 7, 8; November 21; December 26 The local areas out of which most homicide stories came was East Austin (71 stories), Austin (54 stories), and Travis County (21 stories.)

Other reported homicide stories came from: Bastrop County (11), Caldwell County (2), Hayes County (9), and Williamson County (4). The other seven countries into which KVUE-TV broadcasts a viewable signal -- Burnett, Llamo, Mason, Gillespie, Lee, Fayette, and Blanco -- again generated no homicide stories. In 1996, KVUE-TV broadcast a few less national or international homicide stories from imported sources (13 stories from ABC network satellite feeds); intrastate microwave feeds provided the remaining 13 Texas regional homicide stories. Again, I was only looking at local homicide coverage by KVUE-TV in 1996, without regional or national stories, and without inclusion of days without crime coverage. Therefore, my true total of 1996 newscasts viewed with local homicide coverage was 172 stories.

Story Rank in Newscast. Of the local homicide stories viewed from 1995, 29 stories were slotted as the fourth news item, and homicide stories lead newscasts 23 times. (For further rankings see Table 1 after endnotes) In 1996, with the crime guidelines in place, homicide stories lead 42 newscasts, were ranked in the third slot 38 times, and ran as the second story 32 times. (For further rankings see Table 2 after endnotes.) It appears homicide stories increased during the first year of the crime guidelines and were more likely to lead the 10 p.m. KVUE-TV newscasts than in 1995, however, the sample size was somewhat smaller in 1995.

Length of Stories. In 1995 KVUE-TV homicide stories averaged 1:15 each; the longest running 4:07, the shortest lasting 15 seconds. (See Table 4 after endnotes.) KVUE-TV had a tendency of running longer packages in general, with many homicide stories lasting a bit over two minutes. Commercial TV news consultants would consider that length too long for one story, but KVUE-TV claims not to use the services of a paid news consultant. Harmon's (1997) research suggests that local stations employing news consultants tend to use "more video, chatter, [and] longer lead-ins" (p.7) than do the non-consulted. Harmon (1997) also says, "non-consulted stations had longer news stories" (p. 7). The KVUE-TV story length data I found corroborates Harmon's (1997) conclusions. In 1996, during the first year of the crime guidelines, KVUE-TV's homicide stories averaged about 19 seconds longer than in 1995.

Race. Race was determined by the ethnic surnames of the victims of the crime or the surnames of the offenders. Occasionally a picture of the offender or victim was shown which helped to determine race. Also, after viewing dozens of crime stories, certain "crime areas" emerged. For example, East Austin, northern Travis County, and North Austin had more black and Hispanic crime reported than others did. Such areas occasionally acted as a cue for establishing race.

Although official crime statistics show, for example, Hispanic homicide deaths in 1995, KVUE-TV broadcast 40 stories of Hispanic homicides. (See Table 7 after endnotes.) This does not mean that KVUE-TV falsified 15 homicide stories, nor does it mean of the 40 stories it broadcast, each story was given a single exposure. On the contrary, most high-profile homicides (i.e., ones particularly heinous or brutal) were reported as ongoing stories with several exposures during each news cycle. I ran out of both time and resources to do the crosschecking necessary to determine with any certainty which official homicides became KVUE-TV crime stories. Again, the problem was multiple exposures of the same story.

Multiple Exposures. Because of the organizational nature of writing and reporting news, a single news story will be reported several times. Take, for example, one that broke in the middle of May 1996. A toddler was found dead at an unlicensed daycare center in East Austin. An elderly African-American couple, R.L and Shirley Murray, and a few family members ran the center. The two-year-old died of ruptured internal organs and massive hemorrhaging, suggesting the child had been beaten or dropped. The only other person in the room at the time of death was Lacrecia; the Murray's 12-year-old adopted daughter. Police continued to investigate.

The story resurfaced on KVUE-TV's 10 p.m. newscast on May 30, 1996. Events were recapped but this time the focus was on Lacrecia Murray, whom authorities charged with the death of the two-year-old. The story, albeit updated, is presented again is on KVUE-TV's 10 p.m. newscast on July 30, 1996. This time the focus is on the beginning of the Murray trial and the fact that Lacrecia would be the youngest murder suspect ever to stand trial in Texas. The Murray story was repeated again on KVUE-TV's newscast on:

July 31, 1996: Murray's adopted father takes the stand.
August 1, 1996: Lacrecia testifies she dropped and kicked the child.
August 7, 1996: A guilty verdict is handed down.
August 9, 1996: Lacrecia is sentenced to 20 years in jail for the death of the toddler.

One story, seven exposures on KVUE-TV's 10 p.m. newscasts alone. Even though police data show 12 African-American homicides in 1996, KVUE-TV reported only 11 stories, seven of which were multiple accounts of the same story, and the four remaining African-American homicide stories were reported one time each. That means KVUE-TV actually reported only four African-American homicides. The eight other African-American homicides, for whatever reason, were not considered newsworthy and were not reported by KVUE-TV. Multiple exposures of the same story was the case for six homicide events in 1995, when each story (with updates) was played an average of five times, and in 1996, when seven homicide separate stories were presented an average of four times each.

Retro-Crime. On December 6, 1995, during its 10 p.m. newscast, KVUE-TV observed the fourth anniversary of a grisly crime dubbed "the yogurt shop murders." In this case, five white, teenage high school girls were killed at a suburban yogurt shop in which they worked. The shop was then burned leaving no clues and the killer still at large. The story was retold with file tape, interviews, shocked relatives, etc. It ranked as the fourth story in the local news line-up and consumed nearly five minutes or about one third of the hard news portion of the broadcast. Next, during the 10 p.m. newscast on February 28, 1995, KVUE-TV revived the bloody details of the "Luby Restaurant killings," in which 20 people were gunned down as they ate lunch at a popular cafeteria-style Austin eatery. The story was ranked second in the newscast and consumed over three and one half minutes. Both of these crime retrospectives occurred before the KVUE-TV crime guidelines were installed in January of 1996. However, even with the crime guidelines in place, KVUE-TV continued airing crime retrospectives, one in particular on August 1, 1996: the 30th anniversary of Austin mass murder, Charles Whitman. Whitman, one of the first mass-murderers heavily covered by television news, stood atop the University of Texas bell tower shooting a high powered rifle into a crowd of students and passersby. He killed 16 people, including his mother, and wounded 31 others before he was shot and killed by Austin police. KVUE-TV observed the gruesome anniversary with a special four-minute retrospective, placing it as the second story in the newscast, and recalling black and white file-film footage and interviews.

Why would KVUE-TV present retro-crime stories so frequently? Were these just slow news days? Perhaps, but I do not think that was the only motivator for the retro-crime reports. My conclusions are: First, each story was a particularly gruesome and spectacular local crime event of its time, therefore, audience-appealing. Second, the killer or victims were mostly white and the magnitude of deaths was high. Third, there was just not that much local homicide crime in Austin to report. Such shocking and brutal crimes were literally life-changing experiences for the people of Austin, each leaving an indelible mark -- akin to how some recall where they were and what they were doing upon hearing the news of President Kennedy's assassination or the Challenger space-shuttle disaster. Also, in terms of newsroom routines and resources, these retro-crime packages could be produced ahead of time, required little or no rewrite, and only needed an up-dated voice over and anchor lead-in. Plus, pre-produced "news/feature" segments such as this are highly promotable and may be scheduled weeks before the actual newscast.

Random Error. Caution is necessary in using these exploratory data to determine any measurable change in KVUE-TV's homicide coverage from 1995 to 1996. Any potential biases due to the number of missing tapes (see above paragraph on textual research/coding) will most likely be due to random rather than systemic error. For a discussion of systemic and random error see Babbie (1995, p. 128, pp. 207-210).

2. **Focus Groups and Marketing.** I was not permitted to witness a live KVUE-TV focus group session nor was I allowed to review any previous videotaped sessions or its digested results. KVUE-TV's General Manager Sam Rosenwasser told me such company information was proprietary and would not be shared (personal communication, January 9, 1997). However, of the focus groups I have observed or with which I have been involved during my broadcasting career, I know that the groups are very flexible in their question structure. They resemble more of a brainstorming or group therapy session, rather than a "scientific" study that checks for, and often excludes, personal biases, weights skewed results, and controls for unwanted variables. On the contrary, in this qualitative and interpretive method of data collection, personal bias and private sensibilities are ***encouraged*** and for which the group leader, or moderator, is hunting. The researchers are specifically looking for generalizable concepts, ideas, or slogans from a small, subjective, and tightly targeted age/sex cohort. Traditional survey methodology, according to Kanner (1989) "elicit[s] only superficialities or lies, not the subconscious desires that drive behavior" (p. 36). Also, a smaller group of respondents (usually a dozen or fewer) are assembled and, with open-ended questions and meandering discussions, are, supposedly "psychologically probed" (Kanner, 1989, p. 36). Facilitator-

led focus group sessions are a classic business-driven idea that instructs management to (1) listen to its customers, (2) probe and question to determine what the customers *think* they want, and (3) give the customers what they say they want. On the third point, KVUE-TV clearly delivers.

According to McFeaters, "useful news about crime" (personal communication, January 5, 1997) is what the focus groups told KVUE-TV they wanted, in both the formally conducted "scientific" research sessions by a paid consultant and, more anecdotally, in monthly station-sponsored community outreach sessions called "KVUE Listens to You" (personal communication, January 5, 1997). McManus (1994) says stations with a strong marketing focus often confuse public taste with public service.

Marketing notwithstanding, in light of the research by Bennett (1996) suggesting the only element in television news which ever really changes is the packaging (i.e., essential news content adheres to the same conventions of personalization, dramatization, fragmentation, and normalization), KVUE-TV *appeared* to be employing some very specific news judgments with its "crime guidelines." KVUE-TV seemed to have broken with traditional TV news convention which, certainly at the local level, insists "if it bleeds, it leads." KVUE-TV continued into the spring and summer to aggressively promote its crime guidelines concept. But was this station really trying to break or, at least, modify TVs "knee-jerk" reaction to crime? Is the reason for KVUE-TV's news selection approach motivated by civic concern or by marketing? There *is* some evidence to suggest there was a civic or community motivation in the "crime guideline" decision. But, again, that "community" was composed of white, middle-class, "right" audience consumers.

3. **Statistical profile**. Austin is the 27th most populous city in the United States with 543,596 people living in Austin proper (Chamber of Commerce Pamphlet, 1996, p. 2). As a greater metropolitan area, Austin ranks 52nd nationally and has seen its population double every 20 years since 1967 to about 1 million residents today.

Ethnically, Austin proper is 57.1 percent white, 27.3 percent Hispanic/Mexican, 11.5 percent African-American, and 4.1 percent Asian or other. For the Austin/San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) the breakdown is as follows: White, 72.percent; Hispanic/Mexican, 22.2 percent; African-American, 10.5 percent; Asian/other: 3.5 percent.

There were 40 homicides in the City of Austin in 1996, representing a drop of 22 percent from 1995. Hispanics and African-Americans make up a disproportionate number of homicide victims; about 38 percent of the 1996 victims were Hispanic, however, this group makes up only 22 percent of Austin's population. In 1996, 28 percent of the victims were African-Americans, which make up about 11 percent of the population (*Austin American-Statesman*, 1997, p. B1). The MSA crime rates are proportionally similar.

Austin's crime rate followed a national trend that shows a five-year decrease in violent crime, but Austin has always experienced a fairly low murder rate. Many experts attribute the low crime rate to the high employment, good economy, and high level of education in the greater Austin area (Austin Chamber of Commerce and Towery Publishing, 1996. p. 26). Note: City of Austin projection from 1990 census; does not include university students.

In 1983, Austin became an MSA based on the 1980 census. For the 1990 census, Bastrop and Caldwell counties were added. United States Census Bureau, 1990, *The Sourcebook on Country Demographics*, eighth edition, CACI Marketing Systems, 1995, p. 6-7.

With so little actual crime in Austin, it might seem like overkill for KVUE-TV to concern itself with guidelines for reporting it. However, crime news is considered one of the keys to quickly attracting, building, and holding the attention of local television's "right" audience. Even if there is no crime to report, a TV station will often import crime news from another city or state via tape or satellite because it is considered that important a news staple. This is a common newsroom practice on "slow news days" (i.e., those times when there is a paucity of visually compelling stories from which to assemble a TV news program.)

4. Compiled from: "KTBC might be switching to FOX's Stable; Agreement to buy local CBS affiliate shocks industry, needs FCC approval," R. Michelle Breyer, *Austin American-Statesman*, 24 May 1994, sec. A, p. 1. "In CBS switch, KVBO will be KEYE: Station takes new call letters to change image, try to gain network identity," Diane Holloway, *Austin American-Statesman*, 31 May 1995, sec. B, p.1. "KEYE gearing up to cover Austin, Channel 24 plans bigger newsroom," Diane Holloway, *Austin American-Statesman*, 25 June 1995, sec. B, p. 5. "Changing channels: The big switch of CBS and FOX," Diane Holloway, *Austin American-Statesman*, 2 July 1995, sec. B, p. 4.

5. Compiled from: "Fox and CBS pull the switcheroo: Musical affiliates," Amy Smith, *Austin American-Statesman*, 28 June 1995, sec. C, p. 1. "In CBS switch, KVBO will be KEYE: Station takes new call letters to change image, try to gain network identity," Diane Holloway, *Austin American-Statesman*, 31 May 1995, sec. B, p.1. "The great channel switch leaves disgruntled viewers," Diane Holloway, *Austin American-Statesman*, 3 July 1995, sec. B, p.1. "Affiliation switches turns viewers off," Dave Liberman, *USA Today*, 2 July 1995, sec. L, p.1.

6. Granite Broadcasting Company is a New York based, African-American owned corporation which currently operates multiple television stations across the United States. Online. <http://granitetv.com>

7. In an unprecedented merchandising ploy for Austin, KEYE-TV had viewers vying to win a $242,000 house to be given away on the fringes of Austin (Holloway, 31 May 1995, sec. B, p. 1). The promotion was a way to "wake up" the market and have it sample KEYE-TV's several newscasts. The promotionary video welcomed viewers into a lovely new home, dissolving to interior shots of a nicely appointed kitchen and bath, carpeted living room, and attached garage.

8. The show was called, "America in black and white: Race and local television news," ABC-TV *Nightline*, 24 September 1996. Appearing for KVUE-TV: Cathy McFeaters, Carole Kneeland. Also featured: Diane Holloway, TV critic for the *Austin American-Statesman*

9. **Use of Crime Guidelines.** The use of KVUE-TV crime guidelines in 1996, with TV graphic and anchor mention, broke out as follows: 31 stories appeared under the guideline, "Does action need to be taken?" KVUE-TV presented nine stories using the, "Is there an immediate threat to safety?" guideline. The third highest category usage was "Is there a threat to children" with 24 stories falling under that rubric. The highest guideline usage fell to the "catch all" category: "Does the story have significant community impact?" Under that banner, 55 stories were presented. Finally, there were 14 stories presented under the "crime prevention" guideline. By mid-year, KVUE-TV began using a mixture of crime guidelines. There were 15 crime stories presented using a trio of guidelines: "Immediate threat/Significant impact/Take action," and 24 stories with the combination, "Significant impact/Take action" rubric. (See Table 5.) KVUE-TV did not use the crime guidelines on imported state, national, or international stories. A total of 172 local homicide stories were presented in 1996.

10. Compiled from: "Cousin, brothers killed in Elgin; Police question suspects, but no charges have been filed in Sunday morning shooting," Claire Osborn, Tom Vaughn, *Austin American-Statesman*, 5 February 1996, final, p.1. "Police still holding four men for questioning in Elgin triple homicide," Rebecca Thatcher, *Austin American-Statesman*, 6 February 1996, final, p.1. "Suspect in triple homicide may be freed; Man arrested in Elgin slayings will be released unless more evidence against him is found," Rebecca Thatcher, *Austin American-Statesman*, 7 February 1996, final, p.1.

11. From: "Three die in murder-suicide in UT housing complex, police say," Christian R. Gonzalez, *Austin American-Statesman*, 26 February 1996, final p. 1. Note: Since the crime event happened on a Sunday morning, I broke coding format and looked at KVUE-TV's Sunday newscasts at both 5:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

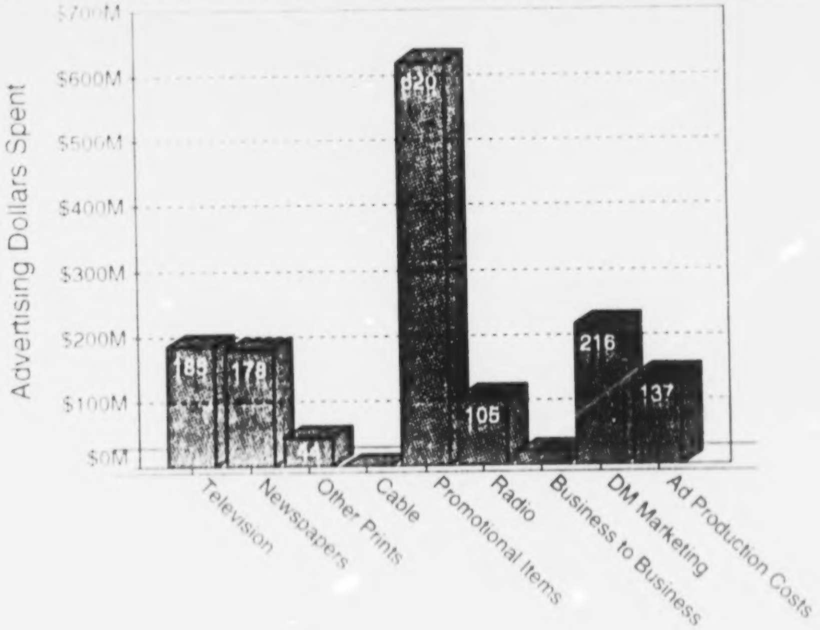
12. Compiled from: "A fatal end to the abuse: Husband kills wife, then self," Bob Banta, 26 November 1996, *Austin American-Statesman*, final, sec. A, p.1. "Protective order wasn't enough to save woman shot by husband," Bob Banta, 27 November 1996, *Austin American-Statesman*, final, sec. A, p. 1.

13. Compiled from: "Police caution Zilker visitors: Investigators searching for suspects in Tuesday night shooting death," Bob Banta, Claire Osborn, 5 December 1996, *Austin American-Statesman*, final, sec. A, p.1. "Wife paid killers $200, records say," Claire Osborn, 6 December 1996, *Austin American-Statesman*, final, sec. A, p. 1.

14. Spelce covered the so-called University of Texas bell tower murders nationally for CBS News. In that incident, Charles Whitman killed 16 and wounded 31 on August 1, 1966.

Figure 1

Advertising Dollars Spent in Austin, Texas Market by Specific Media 1995-1996



$ 1, 505 million TOTAL AD DOLLARS SPENT ON AUSTIN, TX MEDIA 1995-96

Source: Claritas/Ad Audit, Standard Rate and Data Service,1995-96.

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Table 1.

1995 KVUE-TV Homicide Story Rank -- Before "Crime Guidelines."

Rank	Number of Homicide Stories
1.	23
2.	18
3.	21
4.	27
5.	7
6.	11
7.	8
8.	12
9.	3
10.	0

Tapes viewed w/ local homicide coverage: 130

Table 2.

1996 KVUE-TV Homicide Story Rank - After "Crime Guidelines."

Rank	Number of Homicide Stories
1.	42
2.	32
3.	38
4.	22
5.	20
6.	13
7.	5
8.	0
9.	0
10.	0

Tapes viewed w/ local homicide coverage: 172

Table 3.

Austin TV Local News Ratings, 10 p.m. Newscasts Only – 18-49 demos

Survey periods	5/95	5/96	11/95	11/96
Station	Rating/share	Rating/share	Rating/share	Rating/share
KVUE-TV	14/27	15/27	13/13	29/17
KXAN-TV	9/16	10/19	7/5	15/9
KEYE-TV*	5/9**	6/11	7/14**	14/27
KTBC-TV	8/15	2/22	7/7	14/14

*In 1994 and most of 1995 KEYE-TV was known as KBVO-TV, A FOX affiliate.

** MASH reruns, KEYE-TV is still KBVO-TV. News begins on KEYE-TV in late 1995 after the November rating period.

Monday ratings excluded because ABC Monday Nigh Football delays news broadcast.

Source: A.C. Nielsen Co., 1995-1996.

Table 4.

1995-96 KVUE-TV Homicide Story Length

1995 Length of KVUE-TV Homicide Stories:

Stories averaged - 1:15

Longest story - 4:10

Shortest story - :15

1996 Length of KVUE-TV Homicide Stories:

Stories averaged - 1:34

Longest story - 4:10

Shortest story - :20

Table 5.

KVUE-TV "Crime Guideline" Usage (i.e., graphic/anchor mention) 1996

● Does action need to be taken?	(31 stories)
● Is there an immediate threat to safety?	(9 stories)
● Is there a threat to children?	(27 stories)
● Does the crime have significant community impact?	(64 stories)
● Does the story lend itself to a crime prevention effort?	(14 stories)

Combinations of guidelines used:

● Immediate threat/ significant impact/take action	(15 stories)
● Significant impact/take action	(24 stories)

(Total number of local homicide stories represented: 172.)

Table 6.

Comparison of Local Homicide Stories -- Before/After KVUE-TV "Crime Guidelines."

1995 Local KVUE-TV Homicide Stories	1996 Local KVUE-TV Homicide Stories
East Austin- 63	East Austin- 71
Austin - 46 (includes SW, S, N, and NW)	Austin - 54 (includes SW, S, N, and NW)
Travis Co. - 11	Travis Co. - 21
Bastrop Co - 2	Bastrop Co - 11
Caldwell Co.- 2	Caldwell Co.- 2
Hayes Co.- 2	Hayes Co.- 9
Williamson Co. - 4	Williamson Co. - 4
Burnett Co. - 0	Burnett Co. - 0
Llamo Co. - 0	Llamo Co. - 0
Mason Co. - 0	Mason Co. - 0
Gillespie Co. - 0	Gillespie Co. - 0
Lee Co. - 0	Lee Co. - 0
Mason Co. - 0	Mason Co. - 0
Fayette Co. - 0	Fayette Co. - 0
Blanco Co.- 0	Blanco Co.- 0
N = 130	N = 172

Table 7.

Comparison of 1995-1996 Crime Statistics with Crime Stories Broadcast on KVUE-TV 10 p.m. News

Actual **1995** homicide deaths in KVUE-TV primary service area (counties of Travis, Williamson, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Blanco, and Burnett -- Texas.)[1]

Hispanic: 25 = 43%
White: 18 = 31%
Black: 15 = 26%
Asian: 1 = --
Unknown: 0 = --

Total: 59 = 100%

Actual **1996** homicide deaths in KVUE-TV primary service area [2]

Hispanic: 21 = 37%
White: 23 = 41%
Black: 12 = 20%
Asian: 3 = 2%
Unknown: 0 = --

Total: 59 = 100%

Total of *violent death** stories reported on KVUE-TV from **1/1/95-12/31/95** in primary service area during 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday-Friday only.

Hispanic: 40 = 22%
White: 74 = 40%
Black: 16 = 9%
Asian: 1 = --
Unknown: 53 = 29%

Total: 184 = 100%

Total of *violent death** stories reported on KVUE-TV from **1/1/96-12/31/96** in primary service area during 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday-Friday only.

Hispanic: 58 = 27%
#White: 70 = 33%
Black: 30 = 14%
Asian: 3 = 1%
Unknown: 55 = 25%

Total: 216 = 100%

Total of *homicide*+ stories reported on KVUE-TV from **1/1/95-12/31/95** in primary service area during 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday-Friday only.

Hispanic: 38 = 29%
White: 48 = 37%
Black: 25 = 20%
Asian: 1 = --
Unknown: 18 = 14%

Total: 130 = 100%

Total of *homicide*+ stories reported on KVUE-TV from **1/1/96-12/31/96** in primary service area during 10 p.m. newscasts, Monday-Friday only.

Hispanic: 47 = 27%
White: 49 = 28%
Black: 39 = 23%
Asian: 3 = 2%
Unknown: 34 = 20%

Total: 172 = 100%

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[1] Uniform Crime Reporting -- Supplemental Homicide Reports 1/1/95 - 12/31/95, Texas Department of Public Safety, 1995

[2] Uniform Crime Reporting -- Supplemental Homicide Reports 1/1/96 - 12/31/96, Texas Department of Public Safety, 1996

* Includes all manner of mayhem: homicide, auto accidents, fires, drive by shootings, terrorism, etc

# Includes Luby restaurant murders (20 dead) and yogurt shop murders (4 dead) -- neither crime was committed in 1996 -- these were anniversary reports.

+ These figures represent the total number of exposures to a homicide story. The same homicide story may have received multiple exposures on KVUE-TV over several days or months. Subsequent exposures would up-date the story with new or developing information.

(Note: all percentages in this table have been rounded to approximate 100%.)

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Let That Be Your Last Battlefield:
Race and Biraciality in *Star Trek*
Michele S. Foss

Introduction

Media have always been very important in my life. From movies to television to magazines, I have been a fan, a consumer, a participant, and a critic for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I counted the media among my friends, staying with me when I was alone after school, providing me with a reason to go out on Saturday nights, telling me stories and truths, taking me to fantastic places, adding welcome extra spice to the recipes in my imagination.

As a little girl, I used to watch reruns of the original *Star Trek* with my mother (who also loved media), curled up on her lap, mesmerized by the stories from the stars. I remember how she used to go on about how handsome Captain Kirk was, and how she thought my father looked just like him. She would tell me that she and my father were like Captain Kirk and Lieutenant Uhura (my father being European American and my mother being African American). In addition to these references to their interracial marriage, my mother used to tell me jokingly that I was like Mr. Spock ("half"-Vulcan and "half"-human), with a mother from one place and a father from another. At that time, I was too young to really grasp the concept she was introducing to me, but I thought it was cool to be like Spock, so I did not question her statement or the images from outer space on the screen.

Many years later, in college, I finally started to think about what my mother was trying to tell me. As the parent of a biracial child, my mother felt it important to let me see myself represented in those mediums I so cherished. She knew I often saw positive images of European Americans, and she knew I (less often) saw positive images of African Americans, but she also knew that I might not be able to pick out the images of multiracial people in media, because those images were either present but not disclosed or they were absent altogether. At that moment, at the very beginnings of my academic career, and thanks to my mother, I turned away from blind adoration and acceptance of the media, and I turned toward a form of analytical criticism. Since then, I have chosen to concern myself with the questions that plague me and people like myself regarding bi- and multiracial representation in the media.

In this essay, I explore a few of the questions of bi- and multiracial representation in media through an analysis of Star Trek,[1] one of the most popular and academically challenging texts ever to enter the world of media criticism. I have chosen to study Star Trek for images and dialogue dealing with biraciality instead of the media circus around Tiger Woods or a transcript of interpersonal communication between mixed race people and their parents, for example, for three main reasons. First, Star Trek is a multimedia phenomenon, and although I focus on the television series, the films and works of literature do influence this work. This kind of exposure across the board is not available in many forums in which mixed race is included. Second, Star Trek is a long-running series, providing me with extended narratives, as well as character growth and change. Finally, since Star Trek is science fiction, I think it says much about current thoughts of the future, far more vivid than any I could receive from nonfictional representations of mixed race.

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[1] For purposes of clarity and distinction, when referring to the original series name *Star Trek*, the title will appear in italics. When referring to the media phenomenon Star Trek, including all products (television programs, films, books, etc.), the title will appear in plain text.

I will first review the ideas and literature of several authors who have considered the intricacies of race and race in media. I include these ideas within an analysis of one episode from the original *Star Trek*, "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." My first reading of the episode utilizes a traditional race-conscious model, which provides a suitable background for the commentary of scholars on race and media. I then read the episode through my own racial positioning, which includes a mixed race perspective lacking in traditional racial analysis of media. This methodological approach draws on my own social positioning and is therefore not only useful in an academic sense as a useful method for media criticism, but such an approach also may benefit those living and breathing in their own specific cultural locations. I believe this dual analysis serves to illustrate the differences that arise when reading a text through related but diverse points of view. I also operationalize many of the terms used throughout this essay, including "species-as-race," within this analysis.

From this point on, we see the past in the future, and we see the effects of the future on our present. We see that race is all over our dreams of space, and yet those dreams of space pretend to know nothing and yet everything about race. That which we most certainly proclaim becomes that of which we are most uncertain, and we find ourselves boldly going where no one has gone before.

The Episode: "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield"

The year was 1969, and the United States found itself struggling to stand and brush itself off after a turbulent, painful decade filled with racial riots, unrest, and distrust. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been gone less than a year, and the wounds left by his sudden assassination still bled freshly in the hearts of many, hearts that had never fully healed from the pain of losing Malcolm X only a few short years earlier. The Black Panther Party sharpened its claws in Oakland, California. The Nixon presidency attempted to address the nation's racial turmoil, but rioting continued, sadness and confusion reigned, and racial polarization remained. In the United States at this time, those considering themselves righteous tried to erase the stark and definite line that split the population into two groups: black and white.

At the same time, but in another world (a mediated world), the date (or "star date") was 5730.2. *Star Trek* viewers on January 10, 1969, perhaps primed by preceding episodes, watched an episode entitled, "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." The episodes leading to this one had definite social themes, including interracial interactions, scientific experiments on living beings, and environmental concerns. Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry designed Star Trek to attend to social concerns and even the earliest episodes demonstrated this agenda. Three episodes before "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield," in "Plato's Stepchildren," Captain Kirk and Lt. Uhura shared television's first scripted interracial kiss (the viewer can only assume that Kirk and Uhura kiss, as the characters' faces are hidden). In the next episode, entitled "Wink of an Eye," the Enterprise encounters a group of beings that aim to use the crew as breeding stock, hoping that introducing new genetic material will reverse the effects of a volcanic disaster which rendered the aliens terminally damaged. Perhaps "Wink of an Eye" attempted to speak to immoral scientific tests in the name of progress or health. The episode directly prior to "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" addressed the downfall of manipulating one's environment. In "That Which Survives," a colony's advanced technology leads to geologic instability, and the crew eventually learns that even the planet's advanced technology cannot save the lives of its inhabitants. By the time "Let That Be Your Last

Battlefield" aired, the regular audience most likely *expected* the show to deal with some kind of social issue, and the historic "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" did not fail its viewers.

In "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield," the Enterprise is on its way to decontaminate a planet after a bacterial invasion threatens the lives of millions of inhabitants. The beginning of the episode plays like many other episodes: Captain Kirk sitting in his chair, discussing the impending mission while beeps sound and flashes appear in the background. The crew soon encounters a Starfleet shuttlecraft floating adrift. When the Enterprise reclaims the craft, the crew discovers a kind of being on board they have never seen before, a being whose skin color on his right side is a deep, charcoal, greasy black, and on his left side is a chalky, pasty white. The two sides of coloration are *separated* perfectly down the middle of the being's face, most likely a metaphor for the now obvious separation between the races in the United States.[2]

As this segment of this essay will show, Star Trek made a distinct and direct comment on the issue of race with "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." In the following pages, I look at this episode through the eyes of scholars who consider in their writings the task Star Trek assigned itself, namely the presentation of racial images in media. Like most scholarship about race, this episode assumes race is socially constructed but still relies on the fact that races do exist, even if they need not serve as barriers to friendly relationships. Through an analysis of the images and dialogue Star Trek used in this episode, aided by authors of race and media, I hope to illustrate how the show defined race within a science fictional setting, and how that definition relied on the contemporary environment in which it was written.

As mentioned above, the episode begins with Captain Kirk recording the current mission in the ship's log. He gives his crew instructions, and as he calls each bridge crew member by name, eventually accounting for all crew members (or the cast of the series), the viewer recognizes the dramatic racial diversity of the actors portraying the ship's cast and crew. The bridge crew contains representatives of many different ethnicities, and even an alien. The Captain, the leader of the ship, is most definitely a European or European American male.

As the episode continues, the Enterprise encounters a mysterious life form in a shuttlecraft while on route to their mission. Since the crew determines that the shuttlecraft belongs to the United Federation of Planets (of which Starfleet, their own organization, is a part), they decide to bring the shuttlecraft on board the Enterprise. Kirk takes his first officer, the alien Mr. Spock, with him to deal with the being. As Kirk and Spock stand ready to get a first glance at this "creature," the doors to the docking bay open and the being takes a step into the hallway, just barely hanging to the door frame. The viewer first sees the being in profile, and thus only sees his chalky, white face. Unlike the audience, Kirk and Spock's position allows the two to see both sides of the being's face, and they react to seeing the alien with mild shock. As dramatic music crescendos, the being falls to the floor and rolls onto his back, revealing the other side of his face, the black side. Kirk and Spock exchange a look that could be interpreted various ways, from "Here we go," to "What are we supposed to do with this?" The music climaxes, and the show breaks for commercial.

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[2] In 1968, the Kerner Commission released a report stating that 20th century racial lines in the United States were indeed divided along lines of Black and White. The report neglected to mention the increased number of Asian and Mexican immigrants to the United States, nor did the report mention the previous centuries annihilation of Native American people.

When the show returns, the being rests on a table in the sick bay as the ship's doctor, Leonard "Bones" McCoy, examines him. As he sleeps, McCoy, Kirk, and Spock discuss the being's situation. Spock says to McCoy, "You are certain, doctor, that this . . . pigmentation is the natural condition of this individual?" to which the doctor replies in the affirmative. Kirk, looking confused yet fascinated, asks, "Do we have any knowledge of a planet that could have produced such a race of beings?" and the doctor says no. Kirk replies, "Judging by looking at him, we know at the very least he is the result of a very dramatic conflict."

Spock, who is also the ship's science officer, attempts to help his friends better understand the being by describing the alien's situation in terms of accepted tenets of biological science. He says to the two, "All gradations of color, from black to brown to yellow to white are genetically predictable. We must therefore conclude that this alien is that often unaccountable rarity: a mutation. One of a kind." Spock's "mutation" theory sounds reasonable to both McCoy and Kirk, and they decide to leave the matter alone.

When the alien awakens, the viewer sees a vivid shot of him in profile, again with the white side facing the camera. The alien refuses to answer any of Kirk's questions about why he traveled in a Starfleet vessel, where he was going, or what he was trying to do. In fact, the being, who tells them his name is Lokai, becomes hostile and agitated. When Captain Kirk informs Lokai that he will be prosecuted for the theft of a Starfleet vessel, Lokai shouts at him, "You monotone humans are all alike -- first condemn and then attack!" Lokai then refuses to talk at all, and Captain Kirk returns to the bridge.

The ship's sensors detect an alien ship headed directly for the Enterprise, and Kirk orders a red alert. However, instead of colliding with the Enterprise, the alien ship disintegrates, depositing its cargo (another alien being) directly onto the bridge. The second being looks very similar to the first alien being, and the knowledge of this fact contradicts Spock's "one of a kind" theory. The second alien, Bele, informs the crew of the Enterprise that he has come to claim the first alien, Lokai, as his prisoner, because Lokai has been tried and convicted of several crimes on the aliens' home planet. Bele insists upon seeing Lokai, and when the two aliens confront each other, the crew of the Enterprise (and the viewer) learns that there is much more to the story than they had originally thought.

Apparently, Lokai and Bele represent factions at war with each other on their home planet, with Bele's side playing the role of the oppressor and Lokai's side playing the oppressed. The two aliens voice their arguments in front of Kirk, and illustrate that their hatred of one another is deep-seated, and as far as the crew of the Enterprise is concerned, irrational. Bele tells Kirk his people were benefactors to Lokai's people, to which Lokai responds, "Benefactors? He's a liar! He raided our homes, tore us from our families, herded us together like cattle and then sold us as slaves!" Bele disagrees, and tries to explain to Kirk that Lokai's people were savages and that his own people took them in, educated them, and loved them. Lokai strenuously insists that his people were enslaved, saying, "Why should a slave show mercy to the enslaver?" Bele agrees that slavery occurred in the past, but stipulates that slavery ended thousands of years before the time in question. To Bele's claim that Lokai's people were freed, Lokai says, "Freed? Were we free to be men? Free to be husbands and fathers? Free to live our lives in equality and dignity?" The two aliens continue to argue, and they reach no resolution. They continue to hold their positions, each one convinced of his correctness.

As the arguments rage, Bele demands custody of Lokai, and Lokai refuses to allow himself to be taken into custody by Bele. Lokai tries to persuade Kirk to take his side, and he grabs Kirk's arm and says desperately, "Kill him! Kill him!" Kirk rips his arm free, and shouts angrily at the two aliens, "You're two of a kind!" After becoming completely exhausted of their arguments, Captain Kirk insists that the matter should be handled at a Starbase, not on the Enterprise. This decision is unacceptable to Bele, so he hijacks the Enterprise. Of course, Kirk cannot accept his loss of control, and he threatens to self-destruct the ship. Bele acquiesces to Kirk, and the two aliens leave the bridge.

Lokai spends considerable time with the crew, trying to gain their support and understanding. As he addresses them in the crew lounge, he says, "How can I make your flesh know how it feels to see all those who are like you, and only because they are like you, despised, slaughtered, and even worse, denied the simplest bit of decency that is a living being's right?" The crew sympathizes with Lokai's plight, but they insist upon the ridiculous and archaic nature of the aliens' mutual hatred. For example, after watching the aliens argue on the bridge, Mr. Scott calls the two beings "disgusting," to which Mr. Spock replies, "That description is not scientifically accurate." In a close up shot, Mr. Scott answers Spock's criticism by saying, "Mr. Spock, the word 'disgusting' describes exactly what I feel about those two."

Once again, Bele loses patience and seizes control of the Enterprise, directing the ship to the alien's home planet. Upon their arrival, the crew and the aliens discover that the warring factions on the planet have completely obliterated each other. Every single person is dead. Both aliens seem extremely distraught over this revelation, and they turn to fighting right on the bridge. Kirk yells at them, "Give yourself time to breathe! Give up the hate!" The aliens do not hear Kirk's warnings. Bele pursues Lokai around the ship, both of them in a kind of furious, grief-filled daze. The images of the two aliens running is projected over images of fire and burning buildings, rubble in the streets, deserted cities. They both end up transporting themselves down to their burned, broken, and dead planet. The Enterprise leaves the aliens to continue acting on their hatred as the only two living beings on the entire planet.

Analysis

No viewer watching "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" at the time of its original airing with any amount of consciousness about race relations in United States could possibly miss the deliberate references to race made by the episode. In fact, Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, meant for his viewers to see deliberate references to race in the series as a whole. Even from the birth of the series, Roddenberry insisted upon racial ideas, racial themes, and racial representation. "Despite network pressure to have an all-white crew, Roddenberry was determined that minorities should be represented on the Enterprise," says J.M. Dillard in her historical look at Star Trek, "Where No One Has Gone Before" (Dillard, 1996, 13). Dillard also quotes George Takei, who portrayed the Japanese-Filipino officer Sulu, as saying, "I think Gene has often said, 'The Starship Enterprise was the Starship Earth in microcosm.'" So from the very beginning, race was a significant subject on the Enterprise.

However, one might argue that whereas the crew members (the human crew members, that is) of the Enterprise represent different races and nationalities, the characters that textually come from different planets, such as Lokai and Bele, cannot possibly represent races because they represent different species, kinds of life unknown to people on twentieth century Earth. Star Trek might answer that the different species were not actually intended to represent races directly, but rather to represent the issues and conflicts often faced when differences in appearance occur (as they do with races). In order to make a comment on race, including casting the experiences of people living with racial tension in the United

States, Star Trek used the metaphor of alien species to represent race without ever having to directly address actual U.S. racial experiences.

In her essay "Liminality: Worf as Metonymic Signifier of Racial, Cultural, and National Differences," Leah R. Vande Berg develops the theory of "species-as-race" to elucidate this concept that Star Trek tried to introduce: the inclusion of racial themes in a science fiction setting, with humans and humanoids from different planets representing the various races and racial themes. She states that in the Star Trek universe, "racial tensions, differences, and issues have not disappeared; they have merely been transformed into species differences" (Vande Berg, 1996, 55). Vande Berg argues that Star Trek uses species as a metaphor for race, and thus depicts what twentieth century viewers would recognize as racial issues as species issues. Star Trek concerns itself with matters of identity and conflict, assimilation and discrimination, culture and nationality, fear and hatred, and lack of understanding, all without ever mentioning words like African American, or Asian American, or European American. In short, for Star Trek, future species become metaphors for present races. Racism, as the contemporary United States viewer knows it, no longer exists for the members of the Enterprise crew and those living in their moment in time, but species-ism does. So, the term "species-as-race" helps the reader understand that, for Star Trek, racial issues are a priority, but they will only be discussed in the series as species issues. Species-as-race simply means that Star Trek says species but they mean race.

Further evidence for Star Trek's use of species-as-race lies in the fact that the writers of Star Trek operate from here on twentieth century Earth; therefore, they cannot possibly write stories of interactions between species, or between humans and other species, based on personal knowledge or experience. Star Trek's writers are forced to use what they know as the material for their stories in the stars, namely past and present race relations. In this sense, the past and present play a hegemonic role in the construction of the future. If every species on Star Trek got along just fine, the attraction to the show would disappear. Since conflict brings tension, and tension brings the need for resolution, it makes sense to argue that viewers would connect and relate to the stories they understand and recognize.

When Star Trek presents species interaction as racial interaction, the viewer can feel comfortable enough with the text's dissimilarity with reality (in that the characters are from different planets) to enjoy the show. As Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis show in their examination of audience's reactions to *The Cosby Show*, Enlightened Racism: *The Cosby Show*, Audiences, and the Myth of the American Dream, television promotes a race blind view of the world. They state, "Social barriers, like class or race, are absent from this world. They have to be. To acknowledge such barriers would make too many viewers uncomfortable" (Jhally and Lewis, 1992, 134). However, Jhally and Lewis also mention that audiences in the United States, for the most part, will accept representations and discussions of race comfortably, as long as the representations and discussions are not mentioned every episode or preached to the audience. They say, "viewers . . . seemed to be grateful that [raciality] was not something the show repeatedly stressed. The reminders . . . were gentle" (Jhally and Lewis, 1992, 47). So Star Trek makes the racial images "comfortable" and "gentle" by covering them with forehead spines, pointy ears, or yellow-silver skin.

At the same time, the viewer confined to the present can still recognize the text's similarity to everyday reality (in that the characters face issues similar to those faced by anyone) enough to continue watching. Viewers who seek to better their political correctness quotient can absorb the messages that say, "racism can be overcome," to feel like they belong to what the show, and indeed most television at the time, defined as the moral majority.

The minds behind Star Trek then found themselves faced with difficult tasks and questions. How can a show not only define race within a science fictional setting, but also define species-as-race within the same setting? How can race and species-as-race become operationalized with no true precedent? How much should be borrowed, and how much should be invented? In the following section, I analyze "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" to give the reader an understanding of exactly how Star Trek answered these questions. My analysis explicitly illustrates how Star Trek defined race in terms of race, as well as race in terms of species. Hereafter, when referring to Star Trek's discussion of race, I will fully adopt the idea of species-as-race and refer to the representations and images as racial as opposed to species-as-racial, whether the character is human or of a different species. When the distinction between the two is important, it will be noted.

"Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" as Racial Commentary

To begin, we look at the very first images of the episode, those of Captain Kirk seated in the middle of a room (the bridge). As the camera pans out to include more of the bridge, a man who appears to be of European descent crosses behind Kirk, who then addresses the man in front of him, Mr. Chekov, by name. "Chekov" sounds vaguely Russian, perhaps as in a tribute to Anton Chekov, the Russian playwright. Kirk then speaks to Lieutenant Uhura, not shown on the screen. The next shot shows Uhura, and the viewer might consider her appearance and think of her as having an African heritage. Kirk directs his next comment to a man called Scotty, and when the next shot gives the viewer a visual and audio image of Mr. Scott, the engineer, the viewer understands that Scotty is, most appropriately, a Scot, and another European. After the audience meets Mr. Scott, the camera allows the viewer to see Mr. Chekov and the man who sits beside him, Mr. Sulu. Sulu, who is not called by name in this sequence, alerts Kirk of the shuttlecraft, and Kirk gives the order to put the image on the main screen. Kirk identifies no one in particular to complete his order, but the camera shows the audience the crew member ultimately responsible for the task, Mr. Spock. At this time, Mr. Spock says nothing and is not called by name, but as he turns toward the camera, the viewer immediately recognizes his distinguishing features, namely pointed ears and eyebrows.

These first few images are paramount in importance when attempting to ascertain Star Trek's definition of race, because the images reveal how Star Trek positions race-as-race in their science fictional world.[3] We already know, as mentioned above, that the network wanted the entire crew of the Enterprise to be white, but Roddenberry insisted upon minority representation (Dillard, 1996, 13). However, no matter how progressive Roddenberry's vision may have been, in the late 1960s the Starship Enterprise would not have flown to any kind of success without a European American male sitting in the Captain's chair.[4] If the Enterprise were indeed intended to be the Starship Earth in microcosm, then the Star Trek view of the world would hold that European Americans are most certainly in charge. Even though the Star

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[3] The very fact that television relies on inferences viewers make about the race of characters reinforces the usefulness of Star Trek's strategic use of species as a metaphor for race.

[4] As shown in the 1991 Marlon Riggs film *Color Adjustment*, the racial climate in the United States during this time allowed for only certain kinds of interventions to challenge depictions of race on television.

Trek rhetoric speaks of the end of racism and several other social concerns, a racial hierarchy (with European Americans sitting on top) still stands on the Enterprise. This hierarchy must be included, if not by the creator then at least by the critic, in Star Trek's definition of race.

This hierarchy of human races does not complete the definition of race for Star Trek, for as evidenced in "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" by the sequence following the discovery of the alien, the definition seems heavily weighted in favor of alien representations. In the first scene after commercial, in the Enterprise's sick bay, the alien lies on an examining table, while Kirk, Spock, and McCoy discuss him. First, Spock refers to the coloration of the being as "pigmentation," a term that refers to the darkness or lightness in a person's skin. Spock's comment asks the viewer to believe that all alien creatures have pigment in their skin which explains their coloration. In other words, Spock's comment alerts the audience to the fact that the alien being is basically a person like you or me, but with a "pigmentation" not naturally occurring on Earth.

Furthermore, Captain Kirk asks McCoy if he knows of any "races" that could produce such an appearance. The use of the term "races" speaks not only to the fact that the series employs the species-as-race construct, but also to the overall series definition of race. Webster's New World Dictionary defines "race" as "a) any of the different varieties of mankind, mainly the Caucasoid, Mongoloid, or Negroid groups, distinguished by kind of hair, color of skin, stature, etc. b) any geographical, national, or tribal ethnic grouping, c) any group of people having the same ancestry, d) any group of people having the same habits, ideas, etc., or e) a subspecies, or variety, or breed" (Guralnik, 1982, 613). One might argue that Kirk's comment comes from the concept of "race as a group of people with the same background," but I believe Kirk's comment relies more upon the "race as a means for differentiating humans" concept, especially since Spock's next comment refers directly to the human species.

After mentioning Gregor Mendel's studies on genetics, Spock says to Kirk and McCoy, "All gradations of color, from black to brown to yellow to white, are genetically predictable. We must therefore conclude that this alien is that often unaccountable rarity: a mutation. One of a kind." However, the spectrum of colors that ranges from black to brown to yellow to white is a *human* phenomenon. According to Star Trek's own commentary, any coloring is possible on the universal level. In fact, Spock himself was intended by Roddenberry to have green skin (Dillard, 1996, 17). To call the alien a mutation seems premature at best, contradictory at worst. But, regardless of the textual ramifications, the color-based referencing of the alien says a great deal about Star Trek's definition of race. In this case, race is something constant and biologically definable.

The view of race as a scientific category may have held considerable favor in the late 1960s, but since that time, several researchers have begun to question the idea of race as a discrete biological construct. In F. James Davis's look at the personal and societal construction of black identity, Who is Black? One Nation's Definition, he states, "it is the social and legal definition of the black population in the United States that has counted, not its scientific accuracy" (Davis, 1991, 18). He continues by saying, "Human races are subspecies *groups*, not completely discrete categories, and were so even before miscegenation. The fact that reproduction occurs across racial lines demonstrates that all human beings belong to the same species" (emphasis added) (Davis, 1991, 20). Davis argues strongly against the idea of race as a biological construct, and places emphasis on the fact that the process by which a person becomes defined as one race or another is societal, social, legal, and political, and not scientific. Davis might argue that Spock's statement about the mutated nature of the alien sounds racist and antiquated, for a contemporary progressive positioning on the subject would lead one to think of the alien as possessing characteristics previously unknown, but not impossible. The ridiculousness builds when we consider the fact that Spock, too, is an alien and according to the same definition applied to Lokai, Spock must be a mutation as well. However, Star Trek cleverly maneuvers its way around that burden by giving Spock a human (read: white or fair) skin color.

The writers of the episode included blatant comments on race like those above, but also allowed several more subtle commentaries. For example, Kirk's statement, "Judging by looking at him, we know at the very least he is the result of a very dramatic conflict," could be read as Kirk's reflection on the dynamic difference between the colorings on either side of Lokai's face, but the viewer reading the episode from a purely racial standpoint sees that Kirk's remark alludes to what is to come in the narrative. Later in the episode, the viewer discovers that Lokai comes from a home torn by "dramatic conflict" between the inhabitants of the planet. It just so happens that this "dramatic conflict" is not only based on appearance, but also on a history of slavery that produced ramifications that neither side can forgive.

However, when Kirk makes the statement, he and his colleagues believe that Lokai is "one of a kind," and thus Kirk could be referring to a kind of internal conflict. The episode makes clear the fact that the crew of the Enterprise does not agree with the aliens' hatred of one another, and they try to convince both aliens that their battle with each other will get them nowhere. The conflict could easily be one that Lokai and Bele feel about their battle, especially after being ridiculed for it by the (superior? human?) crew of the Enterprise. Again, a racial reading would say that Kirk's statement is a commentary on the conflict between present day racial groups as well as the internal conflict of conscience some must feel about the idea of racism, especially since the show aired in the late 1960s when the United States could not help but think about race, as I mentioned earlier.

"Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" played on that exact fact: plain and simple, the country had race on its mind. The textual references are subtle ("gentle") at first, as mentioned above, but as the episode continues, the connection drawn by Star Trek between race in the U.S. and race in space becomes even more obvious. For example, Lokai's dialogue with Kirk, with Bele, and with the crew of the Enterprise distinctly sounds like a person talking about the history of race relations in this country, European American and African American relations in particular. When Lokai awakens in the sick bay and he is asked to defend himself for his crimes by Kirk, he turns first defensive, then defiant, then derogatory. Lokai says to Kirk, "You monotone humans are all alike! First condemn, and then attack!" If we imagine for a moment that Lokai is a United States ethnic minority on trial for a crime committed in the name of advancing the cause, accused by enforcers who could not possibly understand that cause, the statement becomes familiar. If we replace "monotone humans" with some kind of colloquial form of "European American," our familiarity with the statement increases. Just as Lokai committed a "crime" for the sake of his people, racial activists committed and commit "crimes" for the sake of their people. Just as Lokai tried to defend his actions to no avail, racial activists often found and find no ears for their cries of "by any means necessary." Just as we see Lokai trying peaceful non-cooperation at first, we remember the television news footage of people beaten, kicked, and attacked with water hoses in Birmingham, Alabama. We see young people turning the other cheek after the first one was slapped in the name of peaceful demonstration. Finally, as Lokai verbally lashes out at Kirk for arresting, trying, and then convicting him

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without understanding the crime, we recognize from our own experiences that every person can only take so much. We see at this point that Lokai's struggle sounds like the struggle of several racial and ethnic groups in this country.

The similarities do not end there; in fact, they increase in number and degree of resemblance. Once Bele arrives and the two aliens speak to each other, the viewer witnesses a metaphoric reenactment of a debate between the African American and European American communities in the United States, or more specifically, the "freed" slave population and the group of people who pushed for the return of slavery. As with many other discussions of race in the United States, real and fictional, the tension between the alien characters on the Enterprise is illustrated in, and is supposed to represent, black and white. In his essay, "Communicating Prejudice in the Media: Upending Racial Categories in *Doubles*," Ono argues that the majority of racial discourse in the United States employs the same approach as we witness in "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." Ono says, "popular memory of racism . . . tends to revolve around the experience of the enslavement of African Americans by European Americans; in fact, much of the story of the United States as a nation tends to revolve around and through this narrative" (Ono, 1998, 210). After hearing Lokai and Bele, and then again after hearing Lokai's soliloquy in the crew's lounge, the viewer cannot help but connect the characters' words with the words from the past both for and against the enslavement of African Americans. Clearly, the writers of the episode would have it no other way.

As valiant and progressive as this kind of racial commentary may seem, Star Trek's approach with this episode is still somewhat problematic, because the perspective of those on the Enterprise is privileged and all other possibilities or opinions are denied. Roddenberry's agenda, as configured in the comments of Kirk and the rest of the crew, prevails; the audience hears no voice arguing possible justified reasons for the aliens to hate each other. For example, near the end of the episode, when the aliens discover the death of their planet (including more metaphors from the U.S. racial past -- the images of burning buildings and rubble in the deserted streets could be footage from any number of riots, including the Watts riots in 1965), they immediately begin physically fighting. Kirk angrily yells out, "Give yourself time to breathe! Give up the hate!" When the aliens do not listen, the entire crew seems disgusted, shaking their heads in disapproval and pity. The characters thus position themselves as righteous, because they do not allow themselves to hate like the simplistic and archaic-minded aliens. Of course, the viewer knows that these characters do indeed hate, and their hatred for anything unlike themselves fuels many an episode. Therefore, the comment that Star Trek appears to make is that Lokai and Bele's hatred for each other is a direct representation of hatred between African Americans and European Americans and *this* is the hatred that the characters (or actually the writers and creators) seem to find disgusting and primitive.

The text's inability to explain Lokai and Bele's past thoroughly (especially since the episode so clearly links Lokai and Bele to African Americans and European Americans) makes this approach problematic. The crew, feeling morally just, cannot understand why the two sides cannot forgive and forget. The noble Captain Kirk does everything he can to show the aliens how silly they are for perpetuating an old dispute. The attitude of the crew trivializes the long-lasting pain and anger that slavery left in its wake, a dangerous move for Star Trek to make.

Race and media scholar Herman Gray might argue that Star Trek had no choice but to have the crew of the Enterprise take the soft, pacifist role. In his recent analysis of African Americans in and on television, Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness", Gray states, "In the final analysis, the creative vision of the white producers predominated even if the situations and themes they explored were drawn from African American culture." He continues, "Although the programs were shows about blacks (rather than black shows), there were clearly boundaries concerning cultural representations, social themes, and professional conventions that they dared not transgress" (Gray, 1995, 71). In other words, the writers and producers of Star Trek incorporated their own outlook on race and the history of slavery into the episode, without the direct experience of owning a slave or being a slave. Through the characters, the people behind the scenes told their viewers that they believe both sides of the black and white conflict should *simply* give themselves "time to breathe" and "give up the hate." Had these same people behind the scenes decided to have the crew of the Enterprise side with one alien or the other, the Star Trek history books might not contain "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" today. Gray would probably argue that the episode was bold, yet not bold enough to depict Lokai as justified in his actions, or to hold Bele accountable for his crime of enslaving Lokai's people (his own people?). Gray might also say that the writers would not dare show Bele as justified, even if they might have felt that way as they were writing. With the topic of race so close at hand, Star Trek took the easy path along a not so easy journey.

"Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" as Mixed Race Commentary

Having discussed the episode completely, concentrating on a traditional racial reading informed by scholars of race and media, I now want to provide a different perspective on the way race operates within "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield," and within Star Trek in general. In the next segment of this essay, I would like to use my own method of analysis, informed by my own multiracial self-consciousness, assisted by a few of the few scholars of mixed race and media.

As previously mentioned, Roddenberry designed Star Trek to have racial content from the ethnic appearance and sound of the bridge crew to the metaphoric racialized interactions with alien life forms. However, Star Trek came into existence not just with a drop or two of race alone, but race complete with a twist of biraciality. In other words, racial issues including biracial issues were present on the Enterprise as early as the introduction of Spock. Spock spent only a few days as a total alien before becoming science fiction's grandfather of biraciality. Samuel L. Peeples, author of the *ST* episode, "Where No Man Has Gone Before," admitted that he thought the character of Spock would be far less interesting as just an alien, and thus Peeples suggested that Spock should be, "at least half-human and have the problems of both sides" (Dillard, 1996, 6). Roddenberry himself said, "I made [Spock] a half-caste, because I remember thinking a half-breed Indian would be a lot more interesting than a full-blooded Indian or white, because he's going to be tugged in many directions" (Dillard, 1996, 15). Therefore, from the very birth of the media monster we now know as Star Trek, biraciality played a defining role.

The fact that *Star Trek*, the flagship of televisual science fiction, has among its crew a bispecies (biracial) character seems to suggest that the concept of mixed race identity is indeed a significant topic both for our present and for our future. Star Trek presents images of mixed race identity persons with unprecedented frequency, which signals audiences to recognize the issue at hand. These texts seem to say that when the lines between species (races) are a little more distinct (biological) so as not to be confusing (uncomfortable), then mixed race is (will be) okay. However, in contemporary texts, the presence of mixed race people reminds ignorant audiences how afraid they are to confront race and, as a remedy, biraciality for the most part finds no realistic representation in television. Just as Star Trek must disguise race, it must also disguise mixed race, perhaps to an even greater degree.[5]

For further evidence of Star Trek's presentation of bi- and multiraciality, we must turn once again to "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" for a reevaluation of the images and themes presented, this time with a biracial focus. Obviously, the very first clue that attests to Star Trek's presentation of biracial issues steps out of the Enterprise's cargo bay at the end of the first sequence of the episode. The very first time the viewer sees the alien, Lokai, it is *not* through Kirk and Spock's point of view; the viewer only sees Lokai's white half. Then, as Lokai falls to the ground, the viewer's point of view coincides with that of Kirk and Spock, and all see the alien's black half, as well as the dramatic line down the middle of Lokai's face where the two colors meet. We discover that Lokai is half white and half black, but we are given no explanation as to why. It seems almost simplistic to assume that Lokai represents a "half"-African American, "half"- European American being, and yet as simple as it may be, the association looks too familiar to ignore, and we hear Kirk and the others muse abstractly about how this has happened.

The alien being is obviously, literally, half black and half white. Barring a discussion about how African American - European American biraciality is by far the most recognized on television, perhaps due to the fact that African American - European American conflict is the most recognized in United States history as discussed earlier, suffice it to say that alien could easily represent a mixed race person. Then, Captain Kirk's comment about Lokai's being a "result of a very dramatic conflict" becomes poignant as taken as a description of Lokai as a product of hundreds of years of conflict between groups of people, yet insulting and unoriginal if taken as a description of the internal conflict a biracial person feels at the problem of choosing or belonging to one side of her or his heritage or the other.[6]

Seeing the presentation of biraciality as personally insulting and unoriginal at the least takes over as the episode continues. Although they were only conforming to the popular ideology of the time (race as a biological category), the scientific, as opposed to social, nature of race promoted by this episode paints a narrow and unbecoming picture of the writers. Current research postulates that whereas the societal differences between the races are as stark as ever, and the modes of treatment are as unequal as ever, the actual scientific biological lines between the races are blurring in terms of who is classified as what. For example, Paul Spickard argues that contemporary racial categories are not biological in nature, but rather sociopolitical and the determination of who was what "depended on who was doing the categorizing" (Spickard, 1992, 13). He goes on to note that technically and biologically, in the United States, virtually everyone could be designated as multiracial. He says, "we all have genetic material from a variety of populations and we all exhibit physical characteristics that testify to mixed ancestry . . . there have never been any pure races" (Spickard, 1992, 20). With Spickard's comments in mind, the fact that Kirk,

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[5] Donald Bogle expresses several thoughts on bi- or multiracial actors in contemporary roles, only some of which could be classified as tales of the tragic mulatto. Far more disturbing, in my opinion, is the casting of bi- or multiracial actors as one race (which is common, since many of these actors personally identify as one race anyway) or as a person without race, in a context where the character's race is (supposedly) ignored. Bogle hints at this last issue, but does not attack it, which is where my own research enters. Bogle's ideas about biracial actors and their roles is fascinating, but Bogle abandons the argument before it has a chance to truly develop.

[6] Naomi Zack, in Race and Mixed Race, says that a personal mixed race identity does not exist in the United States, and she agrees with Davis's concept of non-biological race. Zack also argues that no racial words of designation can be appropriately applied to human beings. However, Zack also argues that perhaps bi- and multiracial people should self-designate as "gray," which I feel limits biraciality to mixes of African American and European American, almost as insensitive as limiting race to people whose parents belong to the same racial group.

Spock, and McCoy decide that Lokai must be a mutation of sorts sounds incredibly racist. Of course, the episode *attempts* to transcend the species-as-race paradigm for a moment, but the attempt is unsuccessful. The comment about Lokai reads as: *the creation of a bi- or multiracial individual is a result of biological error.* Spickard might also find racist the fact that Spock, McCoy, and Kirk define the alien within human parameters of appearance, which could be read as the racial equivalent of defining all people of color within parameters of appearance established during times of slavery. In other words, if you don't have the skin color that society says you should have, then you are a mutation, or a mistake, and are therefore "unreadable," or confused, or indeterminant, or soulless, or lacking an identity.

Bele's arrival complicates the situation even further. The fact that he, too, is half-white and half-black could be seen as a matter of personal identification. Just as Lokai and Bele come from the same background, yet identify as different kinds of people, two people with one parent from one ethnic group and the other parent from a different ethnic group can choose to identify themselves as different kinds of people and be at odds ideologically. To clarify, both Lokai and Bele have one black side and one white side. Lokai identifies as a half-white and Bele identifies as a half-black. Similarly, two people might both have an African American parent and a European American parent. The first person might identify as only African American, or perhaps biracial, and the second person might identify as mixed race or European American, and so on.[7] Furthermore, the heated dialogue the two aliens share in the Enterprise's sick bay could also be a reflection of the writers' desire to depict the confusion, the dichotomy, the anger and bitterness, and the raw emotion faced by people of mixed heritage.[8] Again, this depiction strikes me as narrow and discriminatory.

This episode and *Star Trek* in general uses race to explain points, tell stories, and connect with viewers, based on a certain understanding of the nature of race. Without establishing that understanding, much of Star Trek's commentary would lose emphasis. "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" deals with race explicitly, and says a great deal about how the show, series (meaning the other shows and films), and idea of Star Trek conceptualizes race. While it seems that, especially in this episode, race and the main tenets of Star Trek are inextricably interwoven, actually, the above analysis of the episode suggests that race is more of a descriptive point. This is not to downplay the importance placed upon race by Star Trek, but rather to say that Star Trek codes race in a much different way than does United States history.

For example, while obvious similarities exist, fundamental differences arise when comparing real (history) and fictional (Star Trek) handling of race. Like much of United States racial history, the episode points to the (biological) visibility of race. In United States history, and present, society classifies individuals into racial groups based on appearances. If you look like an African American, society will treat you as it treats African Americans. Similarly, viewers (and writers?) classify the characters in the episode into racial groups visually. The human bridge crew members receive their racial classification according to the rules of U.S. groupings. If Uhura looks African, she must be African. If Sulu looks Asian, he must be Asian. We know that Spock is Vulcan because he has pointy ears and eyebrows. We know that Lokai and Bele are aliens because they have pigmentation different from anything ever seen (by those on the Enterprise), and we know they are from the same group because they have the same kind of

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[7] For further information on how and why people identify differently, see Christine C. Iijima Hall, "Coloring Outside the Lines" (1992).

[8] Historically, the vast majority of popular culture representations portray mixed race in this stereotypical manner.

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coloration.

This is where the difference between race-as-race and species-as-race enters. The two aliens are similar phenotypically but their motivations stem from their definite differences. To Kirk, there should be no differences meaningful enough to cause such hatred ("You're two of a kind!"). However, in the reality of the episode, one alien's past includes being a slave and the other alien's past includes being a slave master, and to deny the importance of that difference is dangerous at best. Their similarities are enough to make Kirk assume that they should come together, but neither one of the aliens can forget his past. This kind of race-as-description-only view would not work logically in the United States, past or present, if one accepts, as Naomi Zack (1993) does, the existential experiences of peoples' real, everyday lives versus how people think abstractly about how other people behave and live their lives. Race, in the U.S., carries bags and bags of injustices and suffering and fighting and crying, of rejoicing and celebrating and remembering. The weight of race in the United States blocks any attempts to remove the stains of the past totally and to move toward a unified future. Certain individuals may succeed, but to come together completely as a planet (as Kirk suggested for the aliens) seems most unlikely.

Just as race is coded differently, mixed race, as a result, is also coded differently, but again, some similarities do exist. For example, in the episode, Kirk and company seem to be most fascinated with the appearance of the aliens.[9] Their "half" this and "half" that nature appeals strongly to the crew of the Enterprise (including Spock, which I will discuss below), most likely due to their amazingly noticeable features that separate them from the features of humans. Likewise, in the United States, mixed race people gain attention for looking "exotic," inspiring many questions along the line of, "What are you?" Other mixed race individuals, who perhaps do not look "exotic," and who might exhibit the race-identifying characteristics of one parent more so than a mix of characteristics from both parents, hear no questions and can "blend" into a group if they choose to do so. The situation is a little different with Spock, who looks just like Vulcans with two Vulcan parents, because the crew knows of Spock's human mother. However, when Spock decides to be (or act like) just a Vulcan, he can. Those who do not know Spock has a mixed heritage, or those who forget, do not question his decision to, at times, be of a single species.

The differences in coding mixed race between the show and reality in the U.S. leave me somewhat optimistic. As mentioned above, the episode, and the original *ST* in general, treat mixed race as an affliction or an unfortunate accident. Mixed race in the United States had the same connotation for much of the country's history; however, at the present point in time, mixed race individuals are finding their voices and each other. The country is starting to recognize mixed race as something other than a disorder, or a curse to be confused, dysfunctional, and crazy. Granted, the progress is slow, and the steps are small, but the United States's view of mixed race rests not in the same place it did thirty years ago in the minds of those who made *Star Trek* what it was.

As a final note about the first generation of "Trekking," I have to turn to what brought me to this journey in the first place: Mr. Spock. Watching my childhood hero in "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" caused me some discontent. Spock as a mixed individual in this episode manages to back away from being mixed at all. In his evaluation of Lokai, he says, "this alien is that often unaccountable rarity: a mutation." I find myself wondering how the writers managed to separate Spock as mixed race from the

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[9] Indeed, the fascination here mirrors society's preoccupation with the possible "impurity" or "incompleteness" of anything "half"-ed.

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aliens as mixed race, when under his own criteria, Spock would be calling himself a mutation as well. Why does Spock not champion the aliens instead of objectifying them? I have to question how Spock-as-biracial, whose mixed heritage is central to the plan of the show, was replaced in this episode *about race and mixed race* with Spock-as-scientifically-brilliant-and-unfailingly-analytical-Vulcan. *Star Trek* created a norm for being of mixed heritage, and Spock broke the norm. In this episode, perhaps for the sake of avoiding viewer confusion, the writers had Spock abandon the mixed race identity they had so carefully constructed. Perhaps they envisioned Spock's behavior as simply an individual dealing with his business while dealing with his heritage, placing business above heritage in this case. However, I cannot accept this excuse because the episode focused on race and groups, and Spock could have easily addressed his own nature. I can only point to what must have been *Star Trek's* limited understanding of mixed race in the United States as the culprit. Perhaps they decided to do mixed race without truly understanding what it was they were doing.

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Model Minority Discourse in the News Media:
A Comparison of Asian American and Mormon Cases

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Model Minority Discourse in the News Media: A Comparison of Asian American and Mormon Cases[1]

Historically, both Asian Americans and Mormons were perceived by the American public as "un-American," unassimilated and therefore undesirable immigrants/citizens. In the eyes of white Americans, Asians were barbarian because of their "heathen" beliefs and culture. They were hated because they competed for jobs with white workers. The "yellow peril" stereotype portrayed Asian Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; white Americans feared that the Asian influence would destroy white society and Christian civilization (Miller 1969; Wu 1982; Hoppenstand 1983). For Mormons, polygamy was seen by the American public as one of "twin relics of barbarism," along with Southern slavery (Young 1954; Van Wagoner 1989; Arrington and Bitton 1992). Some even called for governmental action to exterminate the Mormon Church (Bunker and Bitton 1983; Sheldon 1997). Media often depicted these two groups together as social contagious needing to be contained. Cartoons such as "Uncle Sam's Troublesome Bedfellows" (The Wasp February 8, 1879), "The Three Troublesome Children" (The Wasp December 16, 1881), "Uncle Sam's Nightmare" (The Wasp March 24, 1882), "The Chinese May Stay but the Mormons Must Go" (The Judge October 27, 1883), are some examples (Bunker and Bitton 1983, 79, 90, see Appendix I).

Since the 1930s (for Mormons) and the 50s (for Asian Americans),[2] the media have portrayed these two groups in a very different light from the old historical stereotypes.

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[1] This paper develops and draws heavily on ideas from two papers (I was the first author for both papers) previously presented at conference settings: "Use of Asian American History in the News Media: The Discourse of 'Model Minority'" and "'Those Amazing Mormons': The Media's Construction of Latter-day Saints as a Model Minority.

[2] Many Asian American scholars date the mid 1960s as the beginning of an Asian American "model" image in the media after New York Times Magazine ("Success Story: Japanese American Style") and the US News and World Report ("Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.") published two often-quoted pieces in 1966. I, however, traced this "positive" stereotype to the 1950s when the mainstream media started portraying Asian American children as "trouble free." The media tried to find out how Chinese and Japanese kept their children out of streets in this period when America faced the problem of juvenile delinquency. In the case of Mormons, many Mormon historians believe that the American media's depiction of Mormons changed from "negative" to "positive" in about the 1950s or the 1960s. I argue that the change to a "positive" Mormon image occurred earlier. The collapse of communal economic systems, the abolition

Stories about the success of Asian Americans and Mormons appeared often, and the sense that each group constituted a model minority started to take shape in the media. According to the media, Asian Americans' low delinquency in the 1950s, economic success in the 1960s, and educational achievement since the 1980s have made them a "model" for other minority groups; they "outwhited" the whites, as Newsweek (1971) put it. Similarly, Mormons have been portrayed as clean, obedient, hard-working, and self-reliant; the steady growth of Mormon capital and membership (both nationally and internationally) caught the media's attention. Journalists therefore imply that Mormon success, like Asian American success, is worth emulation.

This paper examines the power relationships between the majority and minority groups through a comparison of Asian American and Mormon "success" stories in the media. I argue that the U.S. media cover Asian Americans and Mormons in a remarkably similar manner, utilizing a "model minority discourse"(see Table 1). I focus on mainstream news magazines.[3] I first discuss how the media have constructed both Asian Americans and Mormons as "models" and how this "success" image can slide into a minority "threat." The second part of the paper deals with how the discourse marginalizes both groups by keeping them "placed" as minority.

I argue that journalists both help construct and make significant use of "model minority discourse." Each term of the phrase is important. On "discourse" I generally follow Foucault (1972; 1990). Discourses are historically variable frameworks through

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of polygamy, and the gaining of Utah statehood near the turn of the century all helped to change the public's view of Mormons. More significantly, during the Great Depression, the Mormon church established its welfare system to support needy members. This self-reliant system drew much media praise for the church and thus a kind of "model" image started to crystallize. I therefore regard this era (the 1930s) as the starting point of Mormon "model minority" discourse in the media.

[3] Readers' Guide for Periodical Literature and Wilson Index for Humanities are the two main databases used to locate primary sources for this paper. Because I focus on the model minority stereotype, I do not address the total coverage of these two groups in the media. Rather, I selected only titles that expressed "positive" characteristics about Asian Americans and Mormons (or the Mormon Church in general). Also, because I deal with so-called "mainstream" media's portrayals of the groups, I included only major news magazines (such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report) and popular magazines (such as The New

which particular topics are discussed. Discourses are both epistemologically productive and confining. They open up ways to gain knowledge, yet limit the shape this knowledge takes. My use of the term "model" depends upon two important connotations. Models are worthy of emulation and admiration. But "model" also implies a frozen, static representation of something inherently more real. "Minority" gains definition through opposition to the majority. Minority can be defined sociologically--as an identifiable group smaller than another group (the majority)--or culturally--as a group whose values or practices symbolize distinctiveness from the majority or dominant group. I concentrate on the latter definition. Minorities constitute sites of difference, strangeness, or otherness, to the dominant culture. "Model minority discourse" encompasses a complex set of ways to create meaning. It both glorifies certain culturally dominant values and practices, and positions a group of people as representatives of, but not full participants in, the social life of the majority. This paper provides a glimpse into American cultural politics through examining the similarities between Asian American and Mormon model minority discourses used by the news media.

Journalistic Discourse

Journalistic discourse is a special type of discourse. The media are neither apart from nor wholly equitable to society. And, perhaps just as importantly, they are not simply relaters of events and facts within society. I believe that a not-wholly-bridgeable gap exists between society (and its events) and journalistic representation. Journalists unavoidably construct news. In making stories both linguistically interpretable and meaningful as journalism, the news media create and make use of values, conventions, and significance that are nowhere present in events themselves. They have to do so. Just as for any other text, journalists draw upon narrative strategies that create significance far beyond the sum

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Republic, The Nation, and Reader's Digest). See Appendix II and III for lists of model minority articles on Asian Americans and Mormons used by this study.

total of individual sentences (Berger 1997). Familiar narratives make stories easily understandable by virtue of their familiarity, but they also recall interpretations of unrelated events. Because of this (unavoidable) reliance on and perpetuation of pre-existing forms and meanings, scholars suggest that journalism is as important socially for the ways it constructs meaningful communities (and communities of meaning) as for its attempts to dispassionately inform about events (Zelizer 1997).

But whose story is being told, as Bird and Dardenne (1997) ask, or what kind of community does journalistic discourse promote? Journalists' rhetorical decisions are never socially neutral (Mumby 1993). Journalists' literary techniques inescapably carry political and ideological implications (González 1993). Though journalists rely upon widely shared meanings, these community meanings do not reflect undifferentiated community interests (these rarely exist). Rather, each interpretation of the world (or narrative through which the world is read) serves some purposes more than others. Many commentators argue that journalistic practices perpetuate dominant power relations and ideologies (Frus 1994; Herman and Chomsky 1988). I reject conspiratorial or mechanistic versions of this argument (news does not necessarily prop up all elites, elites do not have complete editorial control of news, and no single unified dominant ideology exists). But I take the position that, in general, journalists affirm the existing social order through knowing how to write to their audience and by "tacitly assuming that there is indeed a recognized set of values to which all members of a culture subscribe" (Schudson 1996, 152). Existing social structures come to be seen as "natural" and beyond question, as a result (Bird and Dardenne 1997). Michael Schudson provides a nice summary of this position (though he puts it to a slightly different point) that journalistic discourses and narratives rely on conventions which typically reinforce status quo ideologies:

> News is not fictional, but it is conventional. Conventions help make messages readable. They do so in ways that "fit" the social world of readers and writers, for the conventions of one society or time are not those of another.... Like others, these conventions help make culturally consonant messages readable and culturally dissonant messages unsayable. Their function is less to increase the truth value of the messages they convey

> than to shape and narrow the range of what kinds of truths can be told. They reinforce certain assumptions about the world (1982, 98-99).

Key questions about Asian American and Mormon images are what kind of societal power relations are promoted through the images given and how do they place these two groups within society (Bird and Dardenne 1997). Therefore, I examine how model minority stereotype in the news media functions to stabilize the power relationships between the majority and minority groups by comparing model minority discourse residing in the media's Asian American and Mormon "success" stories.

Asian Americans and Mormons as Models

Success Stories

Under the media's model minority discourse, Asian American and Mormon successes are emphasized in a remarkably similar manner. Stories of Asian American success have been a dominant theme in coverage of this minority group in the American news media in recent decades. Headlines such as "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.," "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," "California's Amazing Japanese," "Our Amazing Chinese Kids," "Chinatown Offers Us a Lesson," "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites," Asian-Americans: A 'Model Minority,'" "The Triumph of Asian-Americans," "America's Super Minority," "The New Whiz Kids," "Why Asians Succeed Here?" and "A 'Superminority' Tops Out," appeared often. The term "model minority" has virtually become an equivalent of Asian Americans in recent decades. How are Asian Americans subject to the model minority image? Asian Americans are "the big winners in American life," as Fortune (1992, 120) puts it. They enjoy "median household incomes of around $43,000, some 15% higher than the figure of whites, [they] are 65% more likely than whites to have earned a bachelor's degree. . . [And] 30% of the finalists in this year's Westinghouse Science Talent Search were Asian-American--a group that makes up only 4% of this country's population"(Forbes 1997, 112).

Stories of individual Asian American success, ranging from students to business people and politicians, are also frequently cited. Stories of Took Took Thongthiraj and Alice Huang are a couple of recent examples. Time (1993) calls Took Took Thongthiraj "the personification of American promise" (55).

> The youngest of six daughters born to a Thai couple who immigrated to Southern California nearly 30 years ago, Thongthiraj has posted a perfect grade-point average of 4.0 at UCLA. She hopes to go on to win a master's degree and a Ph.D., with the eventual aim of teaching women's and Asian-American studies at the university level (55).

Similarly, Science tells another "typical" Asian American success story.

> Alice Huang came to this country on a boat from mainland China at the age of 10. The year was 1949, she was a refugee without a penny to her name, and she was accompanied only by two siblings, but that didn't stop her from becoming a virologist and an American success story. It would be hard to imagine a more impressive curriculum vitae in science: Wellesley, a doctorate from Johns Hopkins, full professorship at Harvard. By 1989, she had become the first Asian-American to become president of the American Society of Microbiologists, and one of the fist Asian-Americans to head any national scientific society. . . (1992, 1224).

In the case of Mormons, dozens of news stories in the past few decades make Mormon success a major theme. The most recent example is from Time magazine's August 1997 cover story about Mormons ,"Kingdom Come."[4] The article claims, "The Mormon Church is by far the most numerically successful creed born on American soil and one of the fastest growing anywhere" (52), "The church's material triumphs rival even its evangelical advances" (52), and "There is no major church in the U.S. as active as the Latter-day Saints in economic life, nor, per capita, as successful at it" (53). Throughout the piece the author quotes intellectuals and businessmen, produces charts and figures, and refers to Mormon mores to support these claims. The story concludes by quoting Mormon Church President Gordon B. Hinckley and confirming that Mormons indeed know the secret of success.

> "From that pioneer beginning, in this desert valley where a plow had never before broken the soil, to what you see today … this is a story of success." It would be unwise to bet against more of the same (57).

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[4] I make this article my most sustained example, not because it always provides the best sense of the model minority discourse, but because it is broad, recent, and a high-quality article.

Other stories multiply this emphasis on success. U.S. News and World Report calls the church "one of the world's richest and fastest-growing religious movements" (1992, 73), poised, according to scholar Rodney Stark, to become the first major international religious faith since Islam. National Geographic (1996) suggests that because seventy percent of Utah is Mormon, the state has unusually high literacy and life expectancy rates and a low unemployment rate. And a 1994 Time article notes the church's numerical, financial, and moral success in a single breath.

> … the Mormon Church is now the epitome of family values and commands an estimated $8 billion in assets even as it accumulates the annual tithes from its millions of believers (65).

There are at least two rhetorical strategies used in Asian American and Mormon success stories in the news media. First is the linkage between the two groups' past and present. Newsweek writes, "Despite years of discrimination--much of it enforced by the federal government--the difficulties of acculturation and a recent backlash against their burgeoning numbers, Asian-Americans now enjoy the nation's highest median family income. . ." (1982, 39) Journalists typically refer to labor conflict between Asian immigrants and whites, the exclusion laws, and anti-miscegenation practices in the early days, and wartime Japanese internment camps to constitute the Asian American past.

A contrast between Mormons' unwelcome past and their venerated present is also used in Mormon success stories. Time magazine reports:

> For more than a century, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints suffered because their vision of themselves and the universe was different from those of the people around them. Their tormentors portrayed them as a nation within a nation, radical communalists who threatened the economic order and polygamists out to destroy the American family…
>
> This year their circumstances could not be more changed… The copious and burnished national media attention merely ratified a long-standing truth: that although the Mormon faith remains unique, the land in which it was born had come to accept--no, to lionize--its adherents as paragons of the national spirit (1997, 52).

The New York Times presents the same idea.

> A century ago, the Mormon Church was a small, persecuted religious cult whose leaders were being hunted down by Federal marshals as illegal

> polygamists. It is now the fastest-growing church among the major denominations in the United States and one of the richest.
>
> . . .
>
> From a largely rural sect with roots in the American frontier, Mormonism has become a predominantly urban faith, controlled by an expanding bureaucracy in Salt Lake City (1986, 19, 21).

Asian Americans and Mormons epitomize American success, the discourse suggests. These "facts" posit an obstacle-filled past for Asian Americans and Mormons and function as a marker from which to compare their "successful" present. The link between a tough past and a successful present, journalists imply, lies in the "hardworking" nature of these two groups. Thus the narrative possesses the following form: protagonist faces adversity --> protagonist ignores the adversity and works hard --> protagonist overcomes the adversity and achieves success.

This is no new story. The model minority narrative carries the same form and function as stories of poor, working-class boys in America who persevere and eventually become millionaires. The moral of this class of stories is that the American economic system works and those who work hard enough will eventually succeed. These stories thus not only legitimate and naturalize a social system in which some face unbearable conditions while others live in ease and luxury, but also imply that one need not question the status quo, since opportunity exists for all within the system.

The (hi)stories mobilized in model minority discourse function in this same way. Although the histories points to prejudices and oppressions perpetrated on Asian Americans and Mormons, the ideological implications of the stories remove these from any possibility of profound contemporary criticism. After all, the story of the model minority seems to say, the oppressions had no permanent impact and may have even served to induce greater success (Current 1988). Saturday Evening Post (1955, 38) and Newsweek (1958, 23), for instance, both found that the "relocation" of Japanese Americans During War World II did no harm to Japanese Americans but "brought them their greatest opportunity" to "enter new occupations, improve their economic status, and help pull down the racial barriers against them." In any event, past oppressions are naturalized as the understandable antagonisms that this pluralistic society has overcome. Contemporary oppressions are thus denied or their significance marginalized. Even where journalists attempt to critique aspects of the model minority stereotype, their literary construction of Asian Americans and Mormons as Horatio Alger heroes undermines alternative ideological implications (Commentary, 1990).

The second rhetorical strategy used in model minority discourse is comparison between different minority groups. Journalists often compare Asian Americans with Jews, African Americans and Latinos. In discussing Asian American achievements, for example, the news media compare the Asian American past to Jewish and black experiences in the United States. The press points out that Asian Americans, like Jews, have been feared and hated as hyperefficient competitors in this country (The New York Times Magazine 1966). The news media create the same narrative form for both groups. Journalists claim that Jews and Asian Americans have broken through the barriers of prejudice and gone "from pariah to paragon status" in American society (Commentary 1990, 25). The reason, according to mainstream journalists, is that the two groups not only "share a powerful belief in the value of hard work and a zealous regard for the role of the family" (Time 1987, 42, see also Time 1993, 55 and U.S. News and World Report 1994, 45), but also are willing to "adapt to a predominant white culture" (Fortune 1986, 149).

Mainstream journalism's traditional (family values) and/or assimilationist explanations (becoming "white") for the "success" of Asian Americans and Jews provide a direct critique of blacks and Latinos (or "the American poor," as Zinsmeister of Current [1988] puts it) and are meant to show them the "acceptable way" to follow. The New York Time Magazine notes that both blacks and Asian Americans have been objects of color prejudice. However, the difference between the two groups is that Asian Americans became "better than any other group in our society" while blacks, on the other hand, are "self-defeating" or "self-destructive" when "new opportunities, even equal opportunities, are opened up" (1966, 21). Similarly, U.S. News & World Report writes:

> At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities, the nation's 300,000 Chinese-Americans are moving ahead on their own--with no help from anyone else . . . Few Chinese-Americans are getting welfare handouts--or even want them. . . Not all Chinese-Americans are rich. Many, especially recent arrivals from Hong Kong, are poor and cannot speak English. But the large majority are moving ahead by applying the traditional virtues of hard work, thrift and morality (1966, 73).

Ignoring the inequalities in American society, these articles seem to argue that any problems of poverty stem from different cultural values or failures of individual effort. If Asian Americans can make it, why can't blacks and Latinos? This attitude not only poses a danger of ranking races by innate, genetic abilities (Fortune 1986) or cultural characteristics, but also uncritically accepts the "conventional wisdom" that poor people are lazy and not willing to work hard (U. S. News & World Report 1966). The model minority thesis thus functions to pit minority groups against each other. The tension between Jews and African Americans in the past, and the conflict between Asian Americans and African Americans now are examples.

The comparison between Mormons and other minority groups are often subtle in Mormon success stories, although blaming those "less successful" is implicit. Similar to the Asian American experience, the key for Mormons traveling "from poverty and persecution to prosperity and power" (American Heritage 1977, 73) is seen to be old-fashioned American hard work and self-sufficiency. A Time (1991) story claims that much of Utah's economic vibrancy results from Mormon values. It notes that Utah has one of the country's best-educated, most productive, and youngest work forces. This work force has become a prime selling-point for global companies looking to expand. Two quotes on Mormon cultural values help explain:

> The church's strict morality … reinforces the hardworking nature of Utah's people. A Wall Street bond trader puts it succinctly: "All they do there is breed, pray and make money."[5]

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[5] Though not as prominent as in stories about Asian Americans (probably because racial difference cannot be implicitly appealed to), a sense exists in some pieces on Mormons that they are able to work unnaturally hard, that they do not need the rest and relaxation most others require. Readers might draw out the notion

> . . .
> "Utah is a unique place, where you can actually get things done," says [Salt Lake City McDonnell Douglas General Manager Al] Egbert. "The cultural norm is to work together and make a profit" (22, 23).

The articles justify the American system. The discourse suggests that a people with a productive economic attitude exists. America, therefore, needs fewer exorbitant welfare demands, it only needs more people willing to work. Time (1997) emphasizes that the Mormon Church teaches that in hard times a person's first duty is to solve his or her own problems and then ask for help from the extended family. The piece carefully notes that the average welfare stay is only 10 to 12 weeks and that employment centers of the church help people become independent. Other articles explain the benefits of church welfare and its effectiveness more explicitly. According to U.S. News & World Report, Utah officials claim that Mormon self-reliance "saves the state untold millions of tax dollars" (1983, 62; see also New York Times Magazine 1962). The story also emphasizes that welfare comes only as a product of work; recipients work at whatever their local church leaders assign. Only then can a person claim church welfare.

The model minority discourse finds Mormon welfare full of lessons for American welfare. America reproduces "the Mormon boast that no church member has ever found it necessary to apply for government welfare" (1975, 210). And U.S. News & World Report notes that "while the national average of State and local spending on relief was rising by 40 per cent, Utah reduced such spending by 25 per cent" (1966, 92). Right-leaning periodicals, understandably, make the implications of Mormon welfare most explicit.

> Among the Mormons it is an emphasis on self-reliance … Self-reliant people take care of themselves and their responsibilities. They are proud and independent, not weaklings and whiners (American Opinion 1975, 17).

Blaming the victims of American society becomes the first concern of this article, and celebrating Mormon ability to care for their own then becomes secondary.

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that fair economic competition against Mormons is futile with their superior capacity. See also "Everybody

> What some of our great leaders had better figure out, and in a hurry, is that we simply can't have forty percent of the population "eligible" for, much less receiving, all those handouts. We simply can't afford it, period. Somebody had better go about making people ineligible, pronto (26).

Mormons' self-reliance and hardworking nature, within model minority discourse, is used to imply that America should do less to ameliorate capitalist processes rather than more, and that employment problems lie more within individuals than the system.

Minority Success as Threat

As van Dijk (1993) points out, a significant feature of stories about minorities is that, more than most stories, they convey a sense of threat or unresolved problem. The danger of the model minority discourse also resides in the thin line between the celebrations of minority success and warning of potential threat. In model minority discourse, success is profoundly ambiguous. Since the "success" comes through seemingly exemplary actions, journalists imply that Americans ought to admire and emulate Asian Americans and Mormons. But because neither group truly belongs to mainstream society, according to this discourse, threatening signals from too much minority success also appear. Asian American and Mormon "success" stories thus appear to fluctuate between stances of admiration and worry.

In the Asian American model minority discourse, Asian Americans often are portrayed as threats. News stories often connect Asian Americans' "model minority" present to their "yellow peril" past to show how attitudes toward the group have changed. But the threat that Asian Americans pose to society, according to news stories, shows that the two stereotypes are not so different.

As Okihiro (1994) points out, the notions of yellow peril and model minority, although at apparent disjunction, form a circular, seamless continuum; each contains elements that can be used to both support and threaten dominant power relations. He argues that "while the yellow peril threatens white supremacy, it also bolsters and gives

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Likes to Work for Bill Marriott," Reader's Digest, January 1972.

coherence to a problematic construction: the ideal of a unitary 'white' identity. Similarly, although the model minority fortifies the status quo, it also poses a challenge to the relationship of majority over minority" (141). As the New York Times Magazine reports, "By any criterion of good citizenship that we choose, the Japanese Americans are better than any other group in our society, including native-born whites" (1966, 21). Asian Americans are seen to embody American values better than any other group. Many thus worry that Asian American "success" can "imperil the order of race relations when the margins lay claim to the privileges of the mainstream" (Okihiro 1994, 141).

This concern originates from the fear of the "yellow peril." Under the pen of Marco Polo, Mongolian soldiers were described as

> brave in battle . . . They are capable of supporting every kind of privations, and when there is a necessity for it, can live for a month on the milk of their mares . . . The men are habituated to remain on horseback during two days and two nights without dismounting; sleeping in that situation whilst their horses graze . . . No people upon earth can surpass them in fortitude under difficulties, nor show greater patience under wants of every kind. They are perfectly obedient to their chiefs, and are maintained at small expense.[6]

The fear of the yellow peril returns subtly in media accounts, even in those, like The New Republic's (1985), which seem to critique the stereotype. The model minority, like Mongolian soldiers, can work and study too much ["They consistently worked 15 to 18 hours a day," The New Republic (1985, 30) writes]; they have patience and endurance. Asian workers and students are able to maintain themselves at little expense and are almost robot-like; they labor and study for hours on end without human needs for relaxation, fun, and pleasure (Current 1988). Asian Americans' group loyalty also glues them together to form a "racial bloc;" thereby they "flood" American markets and displace workers, "flood" American schools and displace students, and "flood" American land with concentrations of Chinatowns, Japantowns, Koreatowns, Little Saigons, Manilatowns (Okihiro 1994, 141). The immigration history of this "model minority," is as U.S. News and World Reports proclaims in a headline: " . . . A Growing Surge of Immigrants from Asia (1973, 94). The article also produces charts, under the title of "Immigrants to U.S.: Trickle Turns to Flood," to demonstrate the growing Asian population in the United States. Similarly, The New Republic describes Asian immigration as a "wave that shows little sign of subsiding," producing an "exploding" population, with "huge backlogs of future Asian Americans" waiting in the wings, held back only by U. S. immigration policy (1985, 24). The notion that Asian Americans' academic "success" constitutes a potential threat is also expressed in the media's model minority discourse. New York Times Magazine describes Asian Americans as "surging into the nation's best colleges like a tidal wave" (1986, 24). The New Republic reports, "The figure is now 10%--five times their share of the population" (1985, 26). Time writes, "Fully 41% of the entering freshman class at UCLA this autumn consists of students of Asian descent. At Berkeley they total 33.6%"[7] (1993, 56). In these cases, Asian American "success" is discussed in almost alarmist tones, reminiscent of when "hordes" of Asians "threatened" California in the late 1800s. Therefore many cry for a quota system to limit the "over-representation" of Asian Americans in elite universities.

The yellow peril represents a masculine threat of military and sexual conquest; the model minority, on the other hand, symbolizes a feminized position of passivity and malleability. Like yin and yang, they are actually the two sides of a single concept. The model minority image seems to mitigate the alleged militaristic danger of the yellow peril. Yet, if taken too far (if "passive" academic success gives Asian Americans a conquering position), the model minority becomes the yellow peril. Therefore, "models" can be "perils" and "perils" "models," despite their apparent incongruity (Okihiro 1994). Not much has changed since the days when Robert Park claimed that "the difficulty is that [the

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[6] Travels of Marco Polo, p. 128. Quoted in Okihiro (1994), p. 119-120.

[7] These figures blur the distinction between Asians and Asian Americans. International students from Asia who were neither born in the United States nor naturalized as American citizens, are often incorrectly counted as Asian Americans. College-student lingos, such as "MIT stands for 'Made in Taiwan'" and "UCLA means the 'University of Caucasians Lost Among Asians," are also used to perpetuate Asian American stereotypes.

Asian American is] still less disposed than the Negro . . . to submit to the regulations of a caste system and to stay in his place." (1917, xiv). Insofar as Asian Americans refuse to stay in their place, Okihiro argues, they threaten the dominant by posing perils of body (the yellow peril) and mind (the model minority). To maintain and justify its power, the dominant group tends to repress Asian Americans on one hand and feminize them on the other (Okihiro 1994; Chen 1996).

Mormon success stories function in the same way. In Time's "Kingdom Come," for example, seemingly innocuous characterizations of Mormon success (family orientation, clean-cut optimism, honesty, and pleasant aggressiveness) sit uneasily beside graphics implying a Mormon threat. The photograph leading into the article shows clean-cut Mormon missionaries seeming to cheer the growing power of the "Kingdom" (1997, 50-51). Mormon conquest, not congeniality, comes to mind here. The multitude of national flags more likely suggests the threat of Mormon power throughout the world than international acceptance of Mormons. Graphics headlined "They're growing ..." "... and they're rich" (54), situated under a photograph representing the strong Mormon financial presence far from Utah, do not calm the reader's unease. And the headlined prominence of such un-American words as "kingdom" and "empire" add to the effect.[8]

The article itself, though much more subtle, also signals that Mormons might be a threat and at least bear watching. It repeatedly emphasizes church power when discussing church success. It numbers Saints in the halls of Congress, mentions the appeal of Mormons to the FBI and CIA, attempts to precisely calculate church assets and income, tells of hard-nosed, if unusually honest, businessmen who run the church, and suggests that few impediments can halt Mormon success in a country which values material achievement. The article also uses the common device of comparing Mormon wealth to that of corporations.

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[8] Referring to the Mormon project as an "empire" revives a practice more common to earlier decades. This is a somewhat surprising exception to the increasingly sophisticated and subtle analyses of Mormons and Mormonism over time. See "Change Comes to Zion's Empire," Business Week, November 23, 1957; "The Mormon Empire," Ramparts, September 1971.

> If it were a corporation, its estimated $5.9 billion in annual gross income would place it midway through the Fortune 500, a little below Union Carbide and the Paine Webber Group but bigger than Nike and the Gap (52).

The comparison shows readers just how successful the church is. But it also reminds readers--though perhaps not intentionally--that in America, non-corporate (especially church) wealth deserves immediate suspicion.[9]

Other articles imply a Mormon threat by suggesting that church success implies dominance over a growing geographic area. U.S. News and World Report puts it this way: "And while it has long dominated Utah politics, its presence is increasingly felt in other Western states and in Washington, D.C." (1992, 73). The Nation uses phrases like "an entrenched power in the Rocky Mountain West ... seek[ing] a greater voice on the national scene," or "In Utah they are a state within a state" (1980, 150). And it seamlessly slides between nineteenth-century Mormon "theocratic communitarianism" and twentieth-century church leaders' ties to major resource-based corporations by invoking an unpalatable image to most Americans:

> the church played a role in the economic growth of the areas under Mormon influence similar to a modern central government in an underdeveloped country (150).

U.S. News & World Report implies more strongly that non-Mormons ought to at least carefully watch the church:

> What happens with the church is of significance to outsiders because of the organization's immense political and social impact on Western states and its growing influence on the rest of this nation and others where it has missions (1983, 61).

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[9] See also the "Mormons, Inc." headline on the magazine cover in which the Kingdom Come article is found. Other instances of the church being compared to a corporation include: "The 'Peculiar People' Prosper," The New York Times Magazine, April 15, 1962; "Latter-day Struggles," U.S. News and World Report, September 28, 1995; "Mormonism Inc.: The Saints Go Marchin' In," The Nation, August 16-23, 1980; "Mormonism: Rich, Vital, and Unique," Fortune, April 1964.

To The New York Times Magazine, Mormonism's social and political influence reaches "far beyond its numbers" and is "increasing," with a "birth rate'almost twice the national average" (1986, 21-22). This narration of a broad, deep, and spreading influence[10] sends the signal that Mormonism, will soon influence the lives of all Americans.[11] Thus, deep ambiguity resides in the theme that Mormons and Mormonism are rich, successful, powerful, and their influence is spreading.

Asian Americans and Mormons as Minorities

Despite the sense that Asian Americans and Mormons represent a certain American vision of success, the model minority discourse also abundantly indicates that these two groups remain a not-completely-assimilable minority. Journalists use a range of techniques to signal continuing Asian American and Mormon otherness. In the Asian American case, many stories construct a rigid distinction between "us" (Americans) and "them" (Asian Americans). For instance, although Newsweek notes that Asian Americans are "often worried that they may be regarded as forever foreign" (1982, 41), the article does little to make Asian Americans feel they belong. Asian American are still treated as non-Americans. The article continues, "California's Silicon Valley, fighting the Japanese microchip challenge, *ironically* is heavily Asian--from the deft Indochinese and Indians who assemble circuits to company founders" (41, emphasis added). What allows Newsweek to find "irony" is the magazine's assumption that Asians in California who compete against Japanese businesses are not Americans but Asians. It is almost impossible to envision that the media would find white Americans competing against European businesses "ironic" (Nakayama 1988). Shortly after Kara Lipinski clinched the gold medal in women's figure skating in the 1998 Winter Olympics, MSNBC News Alert service, which has 850,000 subscribers, produced a headline "American beats out [Michelle] Kwan" (Lee 1998, 64). This headline lasted for only 15 minutes on the Internet and MSNBC later apologized to the outraged Asian American community. Time reports another incident that happened to UC Berkeley chancellor Chang-Lin Tien, the first Asian American to head a major research university in the United States: "Just today I was walking on campus when someone saw me and asked, 'Are you from Japan?' I said, 'No, I'm your chancellor'" (1993, 56). Incidents such as these seem insignificant by themselves; however, together they signify the fact that Asian Americans are still seen by many in white America as "foreigners" and that the media often reproduces this "otherness."

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[10] See also "A Church in the News," U.S. News and World Report, September 26, 1966; "The Story of Religions in America: The Mormons," Look, January 21, 1958; "The Mormons: Builders of American Zion," America, March 22, 1975.

[11] Or even many of the world's inhabitants. See the quote predicting Mormonism as the "next great global tribe" (note again the un-American terminology with which Mormonism is described) in "Kingdom Come," p. 57. Even light-hearted anecdotes can work to the same effect: "One Brazilian jovially complained to Elder [Joseph Fielding] Smith last week: 'The danger to the world today is not Communism, but Mormonism. You people work fast in our country with smiles and songs. Then you have lots of children, who study and get ahead of our kids. Then you get yourselves elected to government positions and boom! you pass a law banning coffee and Brazil falls flat on her face.'" "The Senior Apostle," Time, November 28, 1960, 78.

In the Mormon case, Time's "Kingdom Come," for example, uses of a number of techniques to distance Mormons from mainstream Americans. The story begins by telling of the church's silo in Salt Lake City holding 19 million pounds of wheat. The reporter asks why it exists and how it will be used, as a Mormon bishop (local church leader) tries to explain:

> … the grain in the silo goes nowhere. The bishop … is trying to explain why. "It's a reserve," he is saying. "In case there is a time of need."
>
> What sort of time of need?
>
> "Oh, if things got bad enough so that the normal systems of distribution didn't work." Huh? "The point is, if those other systems broke down, the church would still be able to care for the poor and needy."
>
> What he means, although he won't come out and say it, is that although the grain might be broken out in case of a truly bad recession, its root purpose is as a reserve to tide people over in the tough days just before the second Coming.
>
> "Of course, says the bishop, "we rotate it every once in a while" (1997, 51-52).

In spite of the last paragraph's humanizing touch, Mormons come across as ultimately unknowable. The implication is that they realize they cannot explain themselves to other Americans. They appear reluctant reveal their secrets, almost willing to deny that such exist.[12] The narration of how long it took to find the silo's "real" significance (and the intimation that the reporter had to draw the conclusion himself) suggests that Mormons almost speak another language, one that ordinary Americans need translation to understand.

Ordinary Mormons', and often the church's, actions are almost always explained through translation. This is one of the few articles that lets an ordinary Saint explain Mormon action (though whether readers interpret this "bishop" as ordinary is debatable). But the bishop's inability to fully communicate suggests an uneasily bridged gap between ordinary Americans and ordinary Mormons, thus the need for translators. To supplement its own translations the piece draws upon the usual translation department: non-Mormon scholars, Mormon scholars, dissident Mormons, church leaders, and Mormons of special prominence. Taken individually, choosing these people to interpret Mormonism seems innocuous enough, maybe even entirely appropriate. But viewed together with the interpreters from other articles in the discourse, these types of voices drown out that of the rare ordinary Mormon (for one exception see U.S. News and World Report 1992). Ordinary Mormons still appear strange and unknowable, represented more by their conformity, uniformity, zeal, tithe-paying, secret temple rituals, and belief that they may become Gods, than for their opinions of the church's role in their lives or their relationships with other Americans.

History recitations also reinforce the Mormons' minority status. By carefully noting early Mormonism's "un-American" features (not to mention its continuing "un-Christian" attributes) journalists chart out a space of otherness to which Mormons can easily return, and which they probably have not entirely vacated (American Heritage 1977; U.S. News and World Report 1992; The Saturday Evening Post 1961). The discourse constantly reminds readers of how much separates Mormons from the rest of the country.[13]

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[12] The fact that the summary of Mormon historical Americanization comes directly on this story's heels suggests that Mormon reluctance derive from a desire to appear as much the ordinary American as possible.

[13] Time finds it somewhat incredible that "the Latter-day Saints remain sensitive about their 'otherness'--more so, in fact, than most outsiders can imagine." It suggests, "Perhaps they should just learn to relax"

Polygamy still links Mormons to an unfathomable past. The photographic lineup of Brigham Young's wives in Time's "Kingdom Come" article is an example (1997, 52-53). Authoritarianism has also been a natural characteristic of the Mormon Church, according to the discourse. For instance Reader's Digest claims, "The Mormons were collectivists under a dictator, almost on the communist model" (1940, 191). The New York Times Magazine writes, "The church organization is strictly authoritarian, and the leaders, tenacious alike of their traditions and of their power, exhort their people first of all to be obedient" (1947, 14). In each of the past several decades other issues have also put space between Mormons and Americans. 1960's and 1970's journalists wondered at how Mormons could anachronistically continue to withhold the priesthood from black males.[14] In the 1980s it was the Equal Rights Amendment. News media emphasized the Mormon Church's opposition to this amendment and strongly publicized the excommunication of an outspoken Mormon feminist, Sonia Johnson, because of her strong advocacy of the ERA (for example see New York Times Magazine 1986). In the 1990s, journalists use continuing authoritarianism, anti-feminism, and institutional policing of church history to mark Mormon distinctiveness. Time reports,

> There are limits to Mormon sociability. In 1993 the church capped a harsh campaign of intellectual purification against dozens of feminists and dissidents with the excommunication of D. Michael Quinn, a leading historian whose painstaking work documented Smith's (Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church) involvement with the occult and church leaders' misrepresentation of some continued polygamy in the early 1900s. The current crackdown, some analysts believe, stems from fears of loss of control as the church becomes more international. Most think it will get worse if, as is likely, the church's hard-line No. 3 man, Boyd Packer, someday becomes President. Some wonder how the strict Mormon sense of hierarchy, along with the church's male-centered, white-dominated and abstemious nature, will play as the faith continues to spread past the naturally conservative mountain states (1997, 57; see also Time 1994, 66).

(1997, 52-53). It is ironic, if not entirely unwise, that Time offers this tip while simultaneously reinforcing the insider-outsider separation by subsequently carefully detailing Mormon "divergences" and "distinctiveness."

[14] For examples see "Mormons: The Negro Question," Time October 18, 1963; "Mormons and the Negro," Newsweek March 6, 1967; "The Mormons," The New Republic January 7, 1967; and "The Mormon Empire," Ramparts September 1971. Black Mormon males finally received priesthood privileges in 1978.

All these points suggest that Mormons may be quintessentially American, but a vast gulf simultaneously separates them from the majority's culture. Mormons can easily appear as somewhat unknowable and remarkably homogeneous people who are eminently productive and accomplish great communal feats. They conform unthinkingly, but with intense loyalty to the commands of wise-to-the-world leaders who might unpredictably lead the church in un-told directions.

Asian American and Mormon model minority discourses constitute classic American anxiety toward minorities. While most Americans do not consciously hate minorities, scholars (such as van Dijk 1993 and Okihiro 1994) point out that persistent, usually unacknowledged fear of minorities exists. Differences between people are not well understood, and lack of understanding leads more to mistrust than celebration. People attribute to minorities greater homogeneity than they in fact possess. The term "Asian Americans," for instance, lumps all people of Asian ancestry together regardless of their nationalities, cultural/religious background, or social class, etc.

Mistrust of difference and belief in minority cohesiveness results in fear of minority power. Majorities feel that minorities have the power to produce unwelcome change, unless the majority retains a constant vigil. Minorities might either pollute and undermine majority values, or simply impose their homogeneous will on society by virtue of their unnatural fitness to do so. Bonnie Honig (1997) asserts that Americans hold profoundly ambiguous attitudes toward immigrants (and her argument might be applied to minorities more generally). On the one hand, Americans value the diversity and flavor different groups bring to society. But, on the other, they appear to threaten social stability. The model minority discourse reproduces and sustains both the celebration and the worry.

Conclusion

Both Mormons and Asian Americans constitute "model minorities."[15] Both are used by the American media to affirm a certain vision of America--one that seeks solace in "traditional" and "family" values. Both embody American success through hard work and education. As a result, the model minority discourse functions to readers with certain ideological inclinations[16] to critique individuals and other minority groups who have not "made it." But the discourses on both groups also resonate with those more inclined to fear minorities; both are said to possess more power within America than they deserve. Both seem inscrutable and therefore "other" to the average American. The model minority discourses that have applied to both groups are remarkably similar and equally disconcerting.

But of course the social position of the two groups, though significantly similar in the American media, are not identical. There are profound differences between the groups as well. Most importantly, race and religion do not function identically within American society. American religious pluralism offers Mormons a space to seek conformity should they desire it. Race has never been so open.[17] There are many more people willing to disregard one's religion than people able to disregard race. Race marks people as "others" in many more day-to-day situations than Mormonism ever can. Racial minorities cannot easily slip in and out of the majority as white Mormons can. White Mormons, additionally, always have a much more accessible path to the mainstream. Mormons can always change their minds about Mormonism, but Asian Americans have no comparable choice. The door to majority status is always open to white Mormons, but never completely open for Asian Americans (assuming no sea-change in racial attitudes).

A second difference is that majority anxiety differs for Mormons and Asian Americans. The majority seems to fear concerted Mormon action. Whether a return to

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[15] As perhaps other groups, such as Jews, do as well.

[16] Bennett and Edelman (1985) suggest that news is written in such ways that those who have ears to hear will hear (though they do not use this phrase).

[17] Even the phrase that sometimes connotes Asian-American assimilation--"become white"--suggests that one either abandons one's previous identity or one cannot completely join the dominant group. People of

Mormon communalism or super-efficient conservative Mormon political-economic power, Mormons acting as Mormons are feared, not individual Mormon success *per se*. On the other hand, the sum of Asian Americans' individual success seems to be sufficient to promote fear.

This paper emphasizes the similarities between articles from different time periods. In other words, I focus on the continuity of the larger discourse--the story that permeates individual stories over several decades--because I felt it had not been properly identified nor its implications explored. I am aware that important historical changes have occurred. The media's Asian American model minority discourse has been modified over the years. Many Asian American scholars started to examine problems with "model minority" stereotype in the 80s. Since then, news media have increasingly either allowed Asian American voices to be heard or included arguments pointed out by Asian American scholars. In other words, a dialogue between mainstream media and the Asian American community has been constructed to begin to challenge the media's Asian American model minority discourse. Mormon model minority discourse has not been challenged much since the 30s, however. The majority of Mormons seem to accept/welcome the model image created in the media. One reason, I think, is because the Mormon Church is a proselytizing church. It believes that emphasizing the model image will draw more converts. A more careful charting of historical changes within the Asian American and Mormon model minority discourse will be an objective of future research.

Though discourses are produced and reproduced only through specific instantiations, like individual stories, they simultaneously exceed any particular article. One might think of them as sets of loosely defined elements which can be combined in semi-structured ways to produce an infinite variation in individual articles. Because discourse encompasses pre-defined elements and pre-defined relationships between those elements, they are both attractive (for ease of use and promoting understanding) and limited

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color know that one cannot completely abandon race within American society.

(only a few types of meaning can be accommodated). I do not wish to lambaste journalists for using model minority discourse and its usual narrative structures. The power of discourses is that they make envisioning other possible discourses difficult.

Nevertheless, the news media could valuably incorporate a heightened cognizance of how literary strategies create meaning and carry ideological implications. Clearly, journalists will continue to use strategies that draw upon well-established stories to create meaning. But they could do so more knowledgeably and with greater awareness of the implications of their literary choices. Narratives unavoidably fix points of meaning that facilitate the establishment of some types of social relations and restrict the establishment of other types. As a result, journalists need to be aware of the power of narratives (Berger 1997), and avoid propounding narratives with harmful connotations when they write about minority groups.

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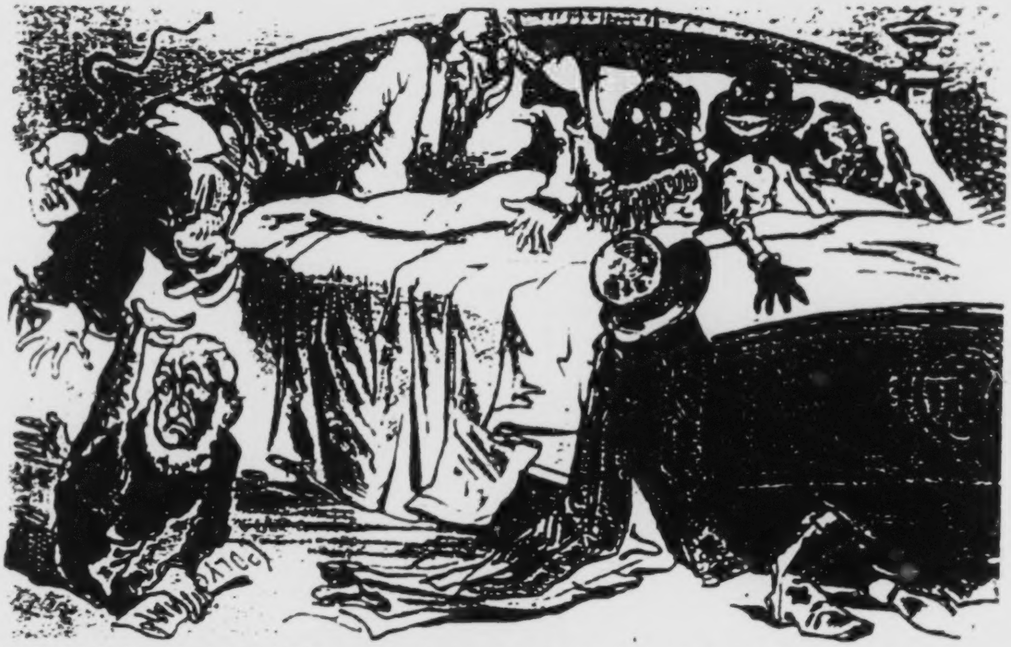
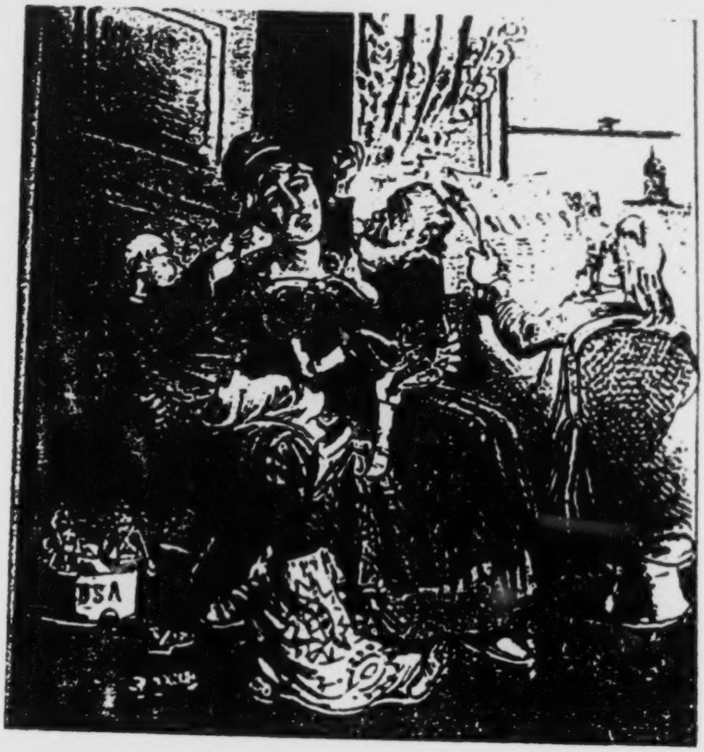
Appendix I



"Uncle Sam's Troublesome Bedfellows." The Wasp, February 8, 1879. Uncle Sam is kicking the Chinese out of the bed, while Brigham Young (polygamy) is already down on the floor. Soon it will be other minorities' (African Americans, American Indians, and Irish) turn.



"The Three Troublesome Children."
The Wasp, December 16, 1881.
An American Indian sits on the ground crying,
While a Chinese and a Mormon (Brigham Young)
Make trouble by pulling hair of the mother—
Who represents (the freedom/liberty of?) America.

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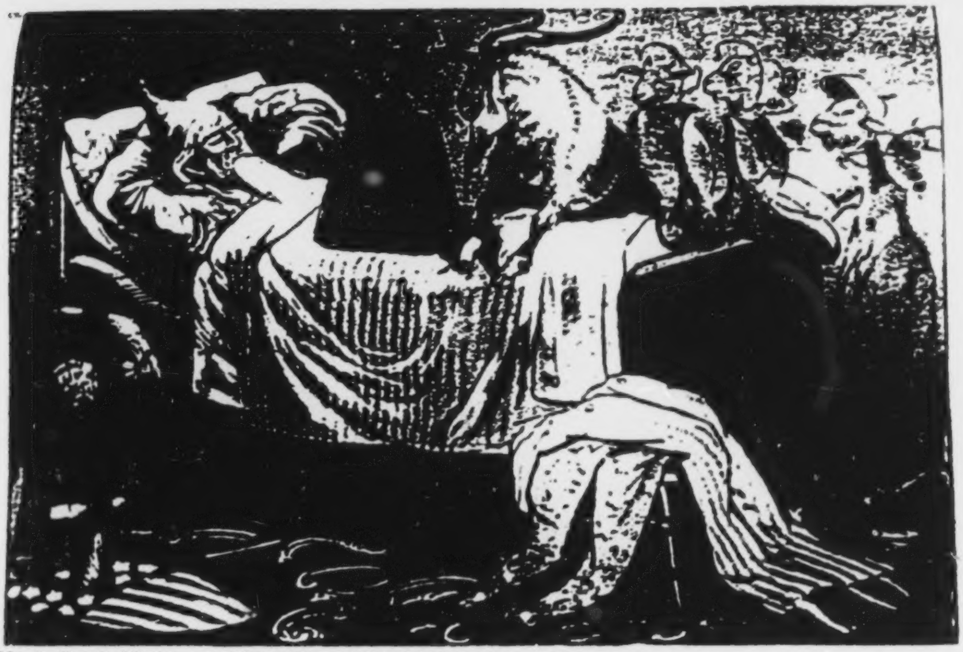
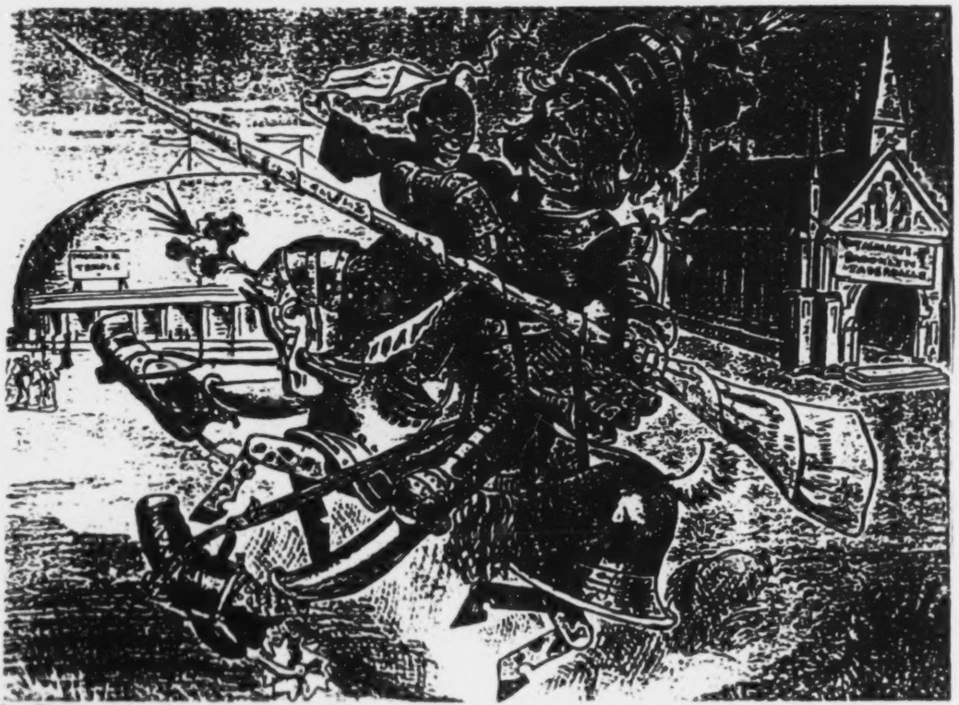


"Uncle Sam's Nightmare." The Wasp, March 24, 1882. A Chinese pressed into a weight and a Mormon Polygamist family (represented by goats) sit upon a sleeping Uncle Sam.



"The Chinese May Stay but the Mormons Must Go." The Judge, October 27, 1883. Mormons were even less welcome than Chinese.

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Table 1: A comparison of two 1966 U.S. News and World Report articles on Asian Americans and Mormons:

On Asian Americans:	On Mormons
Still being taught in Chinatown is the old idea that people should depend on their own efforts--not a welfare check--in order to reach America's "promised land."	"The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." . . .Mormon-run institutions reject any form of federal handout
[In the 19th century], high value was placed on willingness to work for hours for low pay	[In the 19th century], many visitors were impressed by the collective zeal and discipline of the Mormon pioneers in building irrigation works and tilling the soil of an unpromising frontier to make it "bloom like a rose."
The large majority are moving ahead by applying the traditional virtues of hard work, thrift and morality.	The Church is rooted . . . in Puritan ideals of hard work, respect for low, individual responsibility a of communal welfare.
A University of California team . . . reported its impression "that Chinatown streets are safer than most other parts of the city" despite the fact that it is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the United States.	Utah's crime rate is well below the national average. Salt Lake City, with a population of almost 200,000, last year reported no juveniles arrested for murder, rape or narcotic offenses.

Sources: Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S., U.S. News & World Report, December 26, 1966, p. 73-76.
A Church in the News: Story of Mormon Success, U.S. News & World Report, September 26, 1966, p. 90-94.

Appendix II

List of Model Minority Articles on Asian Americans Used in This Study

Diversity Dilemma, The New Republic, June 22, 1998, p. 10-11.
In Defense of Stereotypes: Why Is It Wrong to Point Out that Asians Do Exceptionally Well in Our Society? Forbes, December 1, 1997.
The New Continental Divides, U.S. News and World Report, November 14, 1994, p. 44-45.
Are Asian-Americans 'Underrepresented'? Science, November 12, 1993, p. 1096.
The Perils of Success: Asians Have Become Exemplary Immigrants, But at a Price, Time, Fall, 1993, p. 55-6.
Asian-Americans Bump Against Glass Ceilings, Science, November 13, 1992, p. 1224+.
Up From Inscrutable, Fortune, April 6, 1992, p. 120.
The Silent Minority, National Review, June 24, 1991, p. 19-20.
Kicking the Nerd Syndrome, Time, March 25, 1991, p. 64, 66.
America's "Model Minority," Commentary, 1990, p. 22-29.
Berkeley Opts for Diversity: An Asian Takes Charge, Newsweek, February 26, 1990, p. 71.
The Invisible Success Story, National Review, September 15, 1989, p. 43+.
The Model Minority Goes to School, Phi Delta Kappan, November 1988, p. 219-222.
Asians and Blacks: Bittersweet Success, Current, February, 1988, p. 9-16.
The New Whiz Kids: Why Asian Americans Are Doing So Well, and What It Costs Them, Time, August 31, 1987, p. 42-51.
A 'Superminority' Tops Out, Newsweek, May 11, 1987, p. 48-49.
Do Colleges Set Asian Quotas? Enrollments Are Up, But They Could Be Higher Still, Newsweek, February 9, 1987, p. 60.
Are Asian-American Kids Really Smarter? Reader's Digest, January 1987, p. 87-90.
Why Asians Succeed Here, New York Time Magazine, November 30, 1986, p. 72-74+.
America's Super Minority, Fortune, November 24, 1986, p. 148-149+.
"The Ultimate Assimilation": Asian Intermarriage, Once Taboo, Is on the Rise, Newsweek, November 24, 1986, p. 80.
Why Asians Are Going to the Head of the Class, New York Times Magazine, August 3, 1986, p. 24.
The Triumph of Asian-Americans, The New Republic , July 15/22, 1985, p. 24-32.
Asian Americans: Are They Making the Grade? U.S. News & World Report, April 2, 1984, p. 41-43, 46.
A Drive to Excel, Newsweek On Campus, April 1984, p. 4-8.
A Formula for Success, Newsweek, April 23, 1984, p. 77-78.
Confucian Work Ethic: Asian-born Students Head for the Head of the Class, Time, March 28, p. 52.
Asian-Americans: A 'Model Minority,' Newsweek, December 6, 1982, p. 39-42, 51.
Model Minority: Japanese Join Mainstream America, Human Behavior, December 1978, p. 59.
The A.J.A.s: Fast-Rising Sons, Time, October 20, 1975, p. 26, 31.
Now A Growing Surge of Immigrants from Asia, U.S. News & World Report, November 26, 1973, p. 94-95.
Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites, Newsweek, June 21, 1971, p. 24-25.
Success Story: Japanese American Style, The New York Time Magazine, January 9, 1966, p. 20-21+.
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Nisei: Disguised Blessing, Newsweek, December 29, 1958, p. 23.

The Strange Case of The Seattle Slums: Why Aren't These Kids in Trouble? Better Home and Gardens, July 1958, p. 46-47.
Americans Without a Delinquency Problem, Look, April 29, 1958, p. 75-79.
Chinatwon Offers Us a Lesson, New York Times Magazine, October 6, 1957, p. 49+.
Our Amazing Chinese Kids, Coronet, December 1955, p. 31-36.
California's Amazing Japanese, Saturday Evening Post, April 30, 1955, p. 38-9+.
Why No Chinese-American Delinquents? Maybe It's Traditional Respect for Parents, Saturday Evening Post, April 30, 1955, p. 12.

Appendix III

List of Model Minority Articles on Mormons Used in This Study

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"Beyond the Looking Glass:" Thoughts and Feelings of African American Images in Advertisements by Caucasian Consumers.

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ABSTRACT

Advertisements with "all-black" actors are often placed in "black media" to reach African American markets. The main purpose of this study is to determine if certain African American images could be used to reach other target markets in mainstream media (i.e. Caucasians). Seventy-six Caucasian female and male undergraduates were asked to list any and all thoughts concerning Caucasian and African-American female images. Content analysis of the thoughts revealed that when considering Caucasian images, comments focused primarily on the model's beauty and physical image. Conversely, when Caucasian participants in this study were confronted by African American images, focused on and thoughts centered on obtaining information about the product the model was advertising before making attributions concerning her beauty and/or physical features. In addition, ethnicity of the image was not found to affect purchase intent. The implications of the study's findings in terms of theoretical development of cross-cultural journalism are discussed.

Beyond the Looking Glass:
Perceptions of African American Images in Advertisements by Caucasian Consumers.

"*Personal beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of introduction*"
-Aristotle-

Presently, few advertisements featuring African Americans in leading roles or "acceptable professions" can be found in mainstream media. According to Bowen and Schmid (1997), "for those black models pictured in mainstream advertising, the roles are often limited or demeaning" (p. 134). Minority group actors and models receive less time and air space in major media than members in the majority group do. There are few advertisements in mainstream advertising in which minorities appear alone, and, when minorities do appear, "they are outnumbered by Whites" (Bowen & Schmid, 1997, p. 144). While research continues to discover that the number of African American portrayals in the media is on the rise (Zinkhan, Qualls, & Bisaws, 1990), the increase in number is largely due to placement of these images in "all-black" media vehicles (i.e., *Jet*, *Essence*, "Living Single," etc).

Research suggests that the under representation of ethnic minorities in mainstream media is largely a reflection of some advertisers' concerns with how Caucasians might respond to the ads (refer to Barban, 1964; Bush, Gwinner, & Solomon, 1974; Cagley & Cardozo, 1970). Therefore, advertisers may feel that using minorities in mainstream media may cause some consumers to associate the with a particular minority group (Barban, 1969). Thus, the main research question guiding this study is to determine if the use of minorities in single-ethnic advertisements is and can be effective in a mainstream media.

Specific Aims

To determine how people respond to sole-race ads, an exploratory study was conducted. The purpose of the exploratory study is to provide a basic understanding of how Caucasians might respond and react to images, in which African Americans are dominant, leading characters. A homogenous group of Caucasian males and females were selected for inclusion in this exploratory study because prior research suggests that regardless of attitudes toward blacks, some white adults are less likely to purchase advertised products when the ad features a black rather than a white image (see for example, Whittler & DiMeo, 1991).

Consequently, the present study specifically sets out to identify how members within a majority group process information following exposure to African American images. It is possible to speculate that Caucasian reaction to ethnic images is not demographically (or prejudicially) related or driven as evidence obtained in prior marketing research assumes, but may be driven by other factors such as one's values or beliefs (i.e. group identity; physical attractiveness; self-esteem; self-perception). Thus, it is likely that certain images (i.e. attractive models) have a more positive influence on consumers than does ethnicity of the model.

Overall Significance and Contribution

> *"What many companies and advertising agencies don't seem to realize is that they do not have to use minority media to reach minorities. For advertiser's to assume that minorities do not [attend to] mainstream [media] is naïve, and from a marketing standpoint, economic suicide given the size and financial resources of many minorities. If minorities do not ignore mainstream media, why should advertisers?"*
>
> Lawrence Bowen and Jill Schmid, 1997, p. 142

Mainstream media does attract minorities. According to *Simmons 1994 Study of Media and Markets*, many of the major media (magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Time*) attract at least 10 – 15% of the ethnic population. Even broadcast television programs attract African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian individuals. Market research reveals that ethnic minority groups are regular consumers of many popular "cross cultural" media. Research shows that, with respect to attracting minorities, the following broadcast programs could have a "cross-cultural" appeal. For example, a) soap operas have an ethnic audience rating of 21.6% ; b) evening news shows garner a rating of about 15%; c) primetime serials like "Beverly Hills 90210," "Dawson's Creek," "The Practice," "Ally McBeal," and "Friends," to name a few, have been found to reach up to 34% of the ethnic audiences in the United States (Mediamark Research Report, 1995).

Furthermore, market data on broadcast audiences reveal that compared to Caucasians and other segments, African-Americans watch television and mainstream broadcast programs more than any other group during the hours of 7:30 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. Careful reflection on this audience data still leave this question: why are there so few, if any, advertisements in which African-Americans appear found in prime-time, mainstream media? How will Caucasian viewers respond when confronted by advertisements containing ethnic images?

Much of the research in the area of mainstream advertising and how whites and blacks respond to advertising stimuli was conducted in the late to mid 60s, a time in which our society as a whole was overcoming controversies and problems in civil rights (refer to Barban, 1964 & 1969; Bush et al., 1974; Cagley & Cardozo, 1974; Pitts, 1989). The present study seeks to contribute to and enhance previous literature on the subject of mainstream media and minorities by identifying how Caucasians in the 90s and in the new millenium feel and respond to African American images in ads, especially given societal changes and influences. Have things changed since the 1960s? Have people become more tolerant for and accepting of cultural differences?

With information obtained in this study, network programmers, mass media scholars and researchers, advertisers, as well as media planners buyers might be able to at least begin considering the idea of creating ads with ethnic people as main characters in commercials and place these ads during mainstream media. It is hoped that exploratory studies such as this one might begin to media planners and network professionals with data and other audience information that encourages and allows them to feel to comfortable (or less anxious) about placing "ethnic" ads during shows or in print media that attract a variety of subcultures (i.e. ***Ally McBeal***, ***Friends***, ***Cosmopolitan***, ***Time***, etc)." Thus, data obtained in this exploratory study might be used to identify, or at least begin identifying effects of unfamiliar and unknown African American images on a general, broad audience.

A Brief Review of Research and Literature on Ethnic Marketing

The African American subculture represents approximately 12% of the U. S. population (Pear, 1992; Reese, 1997). In the United States, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and the elderly are important market segments because these subcultures presently account for more than $500 billion in purchasing power (Edmonson, 1985). The African American population has impressive buying power, is increasing in size faster than the general population, and is rising in socioeconomic status (Edmonson, 1985; Reese, 19987; Thompson, 1990). Therefore, based on market research, it seems as if placement of images in mainstream media may or could reflect current and important socioeconomic changes.

African-Americans and the Media

Historically, African Americans have been underrepresented represented in mainstream advertising. "The large number of appearances of African Americans in minor and background roles and the converse—their relative infrequency of appearance in major roles—suggest an unwelcome tokenism" (Taylor, Lee, & Stern, 1995). In a study of portrayals of Blacks in magazine and television commercials, Zinkhan et al. (1990) found an upward trend in portrayals of African American characters and actors in both magazine and television advertisements. This upward trend was also confirmed other related studies which show that African Americans presently account for approximately 25% of characters or actors depicted in advertisements (Bowen & Schmid, 1997; Wilkes & Valencia, 1989). Thus, it appears as if the frequency of African-American portrayals in the media is improving.

According to Bowen and Schmid (1997), the increase in African American portrayals in ads is not a major advance in society because, they contend, there is still room and need for improvement. "It's easy for an advertiser to simply add minority models to diffuse criticism; and, if one were to simply count the number of times minorities appear in advertisements, the increase could be viewed as progress" (Bowen and Schmid, 1997, p. 144). In order to make improvements in the portrayal of African-American images, it is argued, enhancements are needed, not in the number of portrayals, but in how the images are portrayed. Thus, advertisers and advertisements need to begin to show African-American images alone in major roles particularly in the major media.

Some believe that the increase in the number of African Americans images is due in large part to an increase in the number of African American celebrities and sports figures used in endorsements. The proliferation of these role models appears to aid the reduction of racial distinctions, particularly those distinctions found in advertising. Minority spokespersons such as Bill Crosby, Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey, to name a few, are used more because, it could be argued, that these celebrities tend to have a more general audience appeal (Pollay, Lee, & Carter-Whitney, 1992). For example, in categorizing African Americans, many White Americans are more likely to identify with these spokespersons because of their likability, physical attractiveness, and more importantly, their occupational role rather than with their ethnicity (Devine & Baker, 1991). Could physical attractiveness help other, less famous images attain a similar general audience appeal? Or are there other variables and factors (e.g., exposure to and/or familiarity with the image) that might be used to explain why ethnic celebrities can transcend cultural barriers while images that are just as attractive and likable can not?

Theoretical Framework

Ingroup Bias and Ethnic Target Marketing.

Advertisers who use cultural segmentation hope to reach the African American segment by using images and other executional elements that consumers can and will relate to and identify with. For that reason, advertisers use African-American images to sell to African-American target markets, Hispanic images to sell to Hispanic markets, and Caucasian images to sell to Caucasians because membership in these various ethnic groups, research suggests, shapes a consumer's needs and wants. According to research, group membership is often predictive of consumer related variables such as level and type of media exposure, food preferences, wearing distinctive apparel, and product usage (Barth, 1969; Costa & Bamossy, 1995; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1985). Consequently, advertisers interested in targeting specific ethnic segments employ various strategies to better match the psychology and interests of individual subcultures.

Desphande and Stayman (1994) discovered that group membership affects and influences perceptions of advertising stimuli. These researchers discovered that members of minority groups are more likely to find an advertising spokesperson from their own group to be more trustworthy than a spokesperson from another ethnic group. Other work in this area continues to document and provide support for this general tendency for people to engage in what social psychologists have termed ***ingroup bias*** in evaluating others (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Consider the following example: An individual is afforded an opportunity to observe and make assessments of two people performing the same job. Let's suppose that one of the individuals is a member of the same ethnic (majority) group. Research on in-group bias predicts that performance evaluations of the two individuals will be biased in favor of the ingroup member.

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), ingroup bias manifests itself when people selectively remember the ingroup persons' "good" performance and the outgroup members' "bad" behavior. Or, they argue that people may selectively forget the ingroup persons' "bad" performance and the outgroup members' "good" performance. This type of "ingroup" favoritism helps to explain why target marketing is effective: It is possible that people's identification with their particular ingroup causes them to selectively process information contained in the ad and eventually lead to biased emotional responses. Why does this bias in response occur?

Social Identity Theory.

Social identity theory asserts that people have more positive ratings for members who share similar ingroup membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, it is possible that group membership (Caucasian) may cue White consumers' group identity in a particular way and the expression of this identity should be manifested in a relative expression of liking for Caucasian Support for social identity theory can be found in recent research conducted by Coover and Godbold (1998). Results obtained in the study revealed that Whites respond positively to representations of Blacks, particularly when the representation is in terms of political group affiliation.

H1: Caucasian participants will indicate the strongest liking for Caucasian images over African American images.

Overall, this hypothesis proposes that representations of ethnicity in advertisements (African American or Caucasian) may cue Caucasian consumers' racial identities in a particular way. The expression of a cued identity, therefore, is the biased emotional response.

Research on the Effects of Ethnicity on Consumer Purchase Intention

Whittler (1990) conducted two studies focused on examining the effects of actors' race on viewer attitudes and purchase intentions. Data revealed that some white viewers are unaffected by the presence of black actors while other white participants are not as positive to black actors as they are to white actors. In another related study, Whittler and DiMeo (1991) found that regardless of attitudes toward blacks, white adults are less likely to purchase the products and hold less favorable attitudes toward the products and advertisement when the ad features a black rather than a white image.

> H2: Caucasian adults will report being less interested in and likely to purchase the product when the ad features an African American rather than a Caucasian image.

Changing Attitudes

Advertisers in the mid 1960s were hesitant about the possibility of including blacks in advertisements. A lot has happened, however, since the 1960s. Forces such as desegregation and affirmative action have cut across cultures to create similarities and cultural changes. The first research question deals with acceptance of African Americans in advertisements by examining whether or not attitudes toward black images are changing. It is possible that Caucasian and African American people of today are more willing to accept and are more tolerant of individuals of different races. Evidence of this tolerance might be found, for example, in purchase intent and the image's ability to encourage the participants to seek more information about the product.

> Research Question 1: Are Caucasian adults more or less likely to be interested in a product when the ad features an African American image?

Attractive Women Images in Advertising

Analyses of ads in magazines that are read by both males and females such as *Time*, ***Newsweek***, and *People*, show that a large majority of women included in the ads are physically attractive (Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham, 1990). Research shows that women are now as likely as men to be central characters in television commercials are (Harris & Stobart, 1986). Thus:

> Research Question 2: What reactions or types of thoughts do Caucasians have when viewing a physically attractive African American female models?

Method

An exploratory study was conducted with the sole intent to generate new theoretical insights with respect to how consumers respond and react to ethnic images. The main purpose of the study, therefore, is to answer questions that are implied or unanswered by prior research. A content analysis was developed to accomplish three research objectives: 1) test the hypothesis that people respond favorably to "ingroup" images, 2) quantify thoughts and feelings, and; 3) identify or categorize the thoughts and feelings people have when exposed to African-American images.

Design and Procedure

The researcher was primarily interested in identifying instances in which African American models appeared alone and were the focus of the advertisement. All advertisements selected for the sample were removed from magazines, numbered, and catalogued by the researcher and two research assistants. Two judges (not the author) coded the advertisements. The ads were coded based on: a) the product being advertised (i.e., perfume, make-up, lingerie, diet products, health and fitness, and food); b) the exposure or layout of the image (i.e. full body or full-face exposure); and c) model's ethnicity (i.e., Caucasian or African American). Each coder received training in the use of the coding categories. Both judges worked independently in coding the ads.

Next, another process was used to further select appropriate advertisements for study. Selection of the advertisements was made based on whether or not the product or brand name could be easily removed from or cropped out of the ad. This procedure was conducted so that the participant's familiarity with or liking for a particular brand would not contaminate results obtained in the study.

Stimuli

Twenty-four color print ads were randomly selected from the sample of 40. The researcher recreated the ads and designed them in such a way that participant's were unable to easily recognize the product being advertised. A small sample of judges rated the images on (a) model attractiveness and beauty; (b) how interesting the ad was; and (c) the ads' persuasiveness and believability. 10 ads (5 with Caucasian models and 5 with African American models) were identified and selected for further experimentation. Refer to Appendix A provides for examples of the images that were employed in the study.

A random numbers table was then used to identify and determine order of appearance of the ten images. Two ads featuring pets and two for children were included to eliminate or reduce hypothesis-guessing effects. While the study's main objective is the thoughts or feelings elicited by African American models, information regarding the Caucasian models also was recorded so that comparisons of the two groups could be reported.

Sample and Procedure

Approximately 100 students were recruited for the study. Students are considered appropriate for the present study because they are: a) homogeneous, b) a popular target audience for advertisers; and c) as research suggested, may express and be more open to and tolerant of cultural differences.

Participants were upper-division students enrolled in courses at a large mid-western university. All respondents received additional course credit in exchange for participation in the study. After consenting to participant in the study, each individual was asked to report to a "meeting" so that they might add to a discussion of two very "hot topics" in advertising--whether or not advertising manipulates consumers to buy unnecessary products and the issue of overexposure to advertising messages and images.

Upon arriving, participants were told that the researcher was interested in designing an ad campaign for a local retailer. They were then told that the information t hey provide would be used to help create an advertising campaign and creative concept that would be most "effective" for a young, 18 - 24 year old target audience.

Next, participants were allowed to evaluate each of the 10 ads for 2 and one-half minutes. Thus to ensure that data obtained would reflect spontaneous thoughts and opinions, the images stayed on the screen while participants reflected upon and answered questions about the ads. After 2 the ½ minutes were over, the image automatically disappeared from the screen. A black screen appeared for approximately 1 minute and the next image appeared. This procedure was repeated until all 14 (10 experimental ads and 4 non-experimental ads) ads were evaluated.

The Task

Participants were asked to list every thought that occurred while looking at the ad. While this procedure did yield information that was not of interest to the researcher, it was believed that it was better to lose some detail than to risk the possibility of priming or having participants censor themselves and their true thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. And to ensure honest responding, the investigator informed participants that responses and opinions were completely anonymous.

The Variables Of Interest

Background Variables.

Items were used to assess background and demographic information of the sample. One open-ended item was used to obtain information concerning age. Other variables included in the research booklet were: Gender (1=Male, 2 = Female); Ethnicity (1= Caucasian, 2= African American, 3= Asian American, 4= Indian, 5= Hispanic, 6= Other); Household income (1= Less than $15,000, 2= $15,000 - $24,999, 3= $25,000 – 49,999, 4= $50,000 - $99,999, 5=-$100,000 - $149,999, and 6= $150,000 or more), and one open-ended item to assess age. Participants were also asked to identify their involvement level with advertisements for certain products or services (1 = a lot of attention 7 = little attention). The products included on the survey were: cosmetics, diet products, clothing, toiletries, lingerie, food, drinks, music, shoes, medicine, exercise equipment, perfume, fast food, soft drinks, snack food, jewelry, automobiles, sports equipment, computers, movies, books, and electronics.

Dependent Variables.

To assess attitudes toward the image, three open-ended items were used to capture thoughts while viewing the images. In addition, a 6-item scale measuring purchase intent and model attractiveness was also used. The six-item scale was comprised of items that measured the following: a) the extent to which the image "encourages me to learn more" (1=strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree); b) inspires "interest in the advertised product" (1 = strongly interest, 5 = strongly uninterested); c) "attractiveness of the model," (1 =

very attractive, 5 = very unattractive); d) familiarity with the model (1 = very familiar, 5 = very unfamiliar); e) how likely would the image encourage your purchase and purchase intent, if placed in an advertisement for your favorite product (1 = very likely to 5 = not very likely); and f) to what extent the image in the ad influenced purchase intention (1 = a very large role 5 = a very small role).

Participants were also asked to respond to questions concerning level of familiarity with the image. Responses to the items, "I have seen this model before," (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) and "I am familiar with the model," (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) were used identify the extent to which familiarity with the image influences liking and affect.

In order to classify thoughts and opinions of the African American and Caucasian models, a separate analysis was conducted on one open-ended item. Participants were asked to "list all the thoughts you have about the image." Guidelines and procedures for coding the open-ended item will be discussed in the following section.

Thought Analysis Codebook and Procedures

Four independent individuals (two males and two females) of similar background were selected to code participant reactions and thoughts. Coders were trained in the coding procedure. Explanations of categories, category definitions, and dimensions listed in the codebook were provided to each coder during a training session. Verbal instructions were enhanced by practice coding sessions in which examples of thoughts and reactions were shown to the coders and coders were asked to code the data according to their understanding of category definitions. Coders were asked to discuss any problems or questions they may have had regarding coding the data and thoughts.

To ensure reliability, all coders independently content analyzed thoughts. Coders were told as little about the purposes of the study. Disagreements were resolved in consultation with the principal investigator. Negotiation of disagreements was not allowed: In the absence of unanimity, the majority verdict was taken; when there was no agreement, the thought was excluded from analysis.

Conceptualization and Operationalization of Thought-Listing Categories

Affective Response.

Refers to the extent to which viewers expressed positive or negative feelings about the ad. There were three dimensions associated with the affective response category and they were:

1. Positive – the extent to which the participant favors or expresses liking for the model.
2. Negative- the extent to which the participant expresses extreme dislike for the model.
3. Other – Any expression or description not described above.

Type of Thought/Response.

Individuals were asked to "list any and all thoughts that you have about the image." Responses were coded based on the following 5 dimensions:

1. Physical Attractiveness- refers to comments listed that describe or refer to the model's physical beauty, features, or physique. (Examples of thoughts classified in this category are: "She is a beautiful model," "She is attractive," "She has a beautiful smile and nice teeth," "Nice body.") These comments include descriptions of the model's physical features, beauty, and body type.
2. Self-definition refers to those thoughts or comments that related an attribute of the product with an aspect of the self. This concept assumes that there was some cognitive matching between product attributes and the consumer's self-image (Claiborne & Sirgy, 1990). (Examples of participants thoughts that were placed in the category were: "I need something like that for [my problem]," "I want to look like that," "If they could promise me that the product, I would buy it in a heartbeat," "If only I were that beautiful.")
3. Execution style – comments related to peripheral cues such as the illustration, design, and layout of the image or ad. Thoughts such as, "why is she laying upside down?," or "there is too much white space and it is ugly," "I don't like the fact that they used so much purple" are examples of thoughts coded with this dimensions.
4. Product – Responses placed in the product-type dimension of this category must make reference to the features or benefits of using the product. Examples of comments coded with this dimension are: "What type of product is that?" "I am not sure if I am familiar with product she is advertising," "I don't use that product," "I don't need to wear make-up," and "If she were advertising some exercise equipment, I would buy it." For a response to be assigned this code, comments must show that the participant was thinking about some specific attribute of the product and think about how well this product matches some aspect of the self.
5. Other- Comments made that did not center on any of the above categories.

Coders were instructed to assign only one code. For example, if an individual made comments that related to the image's physical beauty, but also talked about executional elements of the ad, coders were instructed to code the first thought listed. This was done in order to maintain the mutual exclusivity of the data analysis.

Coding Reliability

Coding was a problem because it was often difficult to tell what a person meant by a particular thought. If a subject wrote, for example, "natural," "disgusting," "pleasant," or dirty, the coder had to decide if these were statement reflecting negative affective responses toward the image, or toward the execution of the ad. Comments and statements such as these were classified as "other."

Reliability in the coding was evidenced by the extent to which the four coders independently assigned the same code to the same response. Holsti (1969) recommends that intercoder reliability for nominal data be calculated to reflect percentage of agreement. The reliability of the judgments was estimated from the coefficient of agreement among all three judges. The coefficient was computed as the ratio of coding agreements to the total number of coding decisions. Percentage agreement figures for all reported categories were in excess of the 80% agreement standard recommended for content analysis of nominal data. Reliability of the categories are as follows; affective response $\alpha = 96.9$; type of thought α -= 87.9; relevance of image $\alpha = 91.7$; and reason or explanation $\alpha = 90.4$. None of the measures had reliability levels below the .80 standard recommended for content analysis, indicating strong agreement among all three coders.

Data Analysis and Procedure

Measurement of the dependent variables used in the content analysis took the form of a nominal scale. Using SPSS, a statistical software package, and the number of occurrences falling into each dimension was counted. For example: there were three dimensions within the affective response category, positive, negative, and other. Coders examined the responses, assigned a code for the affect. The thought was then analyzed and coded based on the type of thought the person had about the image. Five dimensions were associated with the type of thought. A code was also assigned for this variable and so on. After all the data were entered, SPSS was used to count the number of occurrences of each dimension within each category.

Categories were mutually exclusive because thoughts and responses to an image could only be placed into one and only one dimension. In cases where thoughts were given more than one code, categories were separated into smaller, mutually exclusive categories.

A 2 (ethnicity of model: Caucasian, African American) X (5 portrayal: 5 poses of different models) within-subjects analysis of variance was initially conducted on the data to assess main effects of gender on model attractiveness. This analysis was conducted to ensure that males and females did not differ in their perceptions of attractiveness. The analysis revealed no significant main effects of gender on model attractiveness, $\underline{F}$ (1, 65) = 1.7, $\underline{p}$ = .19). An ANOVA was also conducted for purchase intent and other items appearing on the six-item scale. Results of this statistical analysis will be reported in the next section.

Data analysis of the thought-listing task began with a review of the descriptive statistics such as calculated percentages and means for the categories that appeared on the code sheet. The next step involved cross-tabulations of the data. Cross-tabulations were conducted within the categories (affective response, type of thought, relevance, and explanation) to help uncover patterns in the data that contributed to significance in the Chi-square test.

Results

Initially, a total of 76 people participated in the study. Sixty-three percent of the respondents were female and 36.8% were male. Thus, of the 76 Caucasian participants, sixty-three percent ($\underline{N}$ = 48) were females ($\underline{N}$= 48) and thirty-seven percent ($\underline{N}$ = 28) were males.

H1: Caucasian participants will indicate the strongest liking for Caucasian images over African American images (*not supported*)

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Cross-tabulation results show that a majority of the responses to both Caucasian and African American images were positive, χ^2, 1,6 = 19.5, $\underline{p} < .01$. However, it was interesting to discover that responses were more positive toward the African American models than for the Caucasian models. Further Chi-square analysis did not reveal differences in affective response between males and females, χ^2, 1,6 = 4.9, p > .5. Refer to Figure 1.

While data reveals that, overall, participants responded favorably to both Caucasian and African American images, it is worth noting some of the thought-provoking comments received. For example, one respondent, after viewing an African American model wrote: "it is about time we see positive images of Blacks." Another respondent expressed this same positive sentiment and stated that, "it is really good to see positive images of blacks, especially to know that images like this one is being seriously considered to be used in media or ads" And yet another participant said, "She is beautiful. I wish I had her body. I am glad to see that an advertiser is considering using an African American image that is real and not Halle Berry or somebody else just as famous." Thus it appears as if young people are more tolerant and accepting of cultural differences in media images.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Table 1 contains the data for the affective responses of the images, together with the results of the overall analyses for each category. Cross tabulation results of each of the categories and the calculated responses represents the total number of thoughts identified for each dimension.

Purchase Intent

> H2: Caucasian adults will report being less interested in and likely to purchase the product when the ad features an African American rather than a Caucasian image (*not supported*).

An analysis of variance was run for the purchase intent variable. Data analysis did not reveal a main effect of ethnicity or ethnic background of the image on purchase intent. Males and females were not found to differ with respect to purchase intent, F (4, 61) = 1.3, p =.27. Main effects of model's ethnicity (Caucasian, African American) also was not found, F (1, 64) 3.3, p =. 08. The effect was not qualified by an interaction of ethnicity or of gender, F (1, 1) = .39, p = .81.

Research Questions

Examining specific cross tabulation results for responses categorized by specific type of thought suggests that the participant's employed in this study thought about the two racial images in two different ways. For example, data show that when confronted with and asked to think about Caucasian images, most comments were related to thoughts about and considerations of the image's beauty or physical attractiveness. For a large percentage of the sample (83%), the first thought that came to mind was about Caucasian image's physical beauty. However, when exposed to and asked to comment on the African American images, cross tabulation of the data show that the first thought that came across the minds of most people (85.9%) was a thought or concern about the product and its relevant attributes and/or features. Analyses were also conducted on the gender variable to determine if gender affected the type of thought. Cross tabulations did not reveal significant differences in the responses provided by males and females (all p'' > .6).

Insert Figure 2 About Here

The researcher then analyzed the ratings of all 10 models attractiveness scores to determine if level of attractiveness might have influenced the thoughts and responses. A comparison of the means revealed that, on a scale from 1 = very attractive to 5 = very unattractive the mean for Caucasian models was 2.3 (n = 74). The mean attractiveness score for the African American models was 2.4 indicating that, in fact, the participants found both groups of models to be fairly attractive (p > .7)

Discussion

Data analysis revealed the following:

- Caucasian responses to representations of African American females in advertisements were significantly more positive than responses to representations of Caucasian females in advertisements.
- Gender was not found to influence affective response, type of thought, purchase intent, or the image's relevance.
- When confronted by images of Caucasians in advertisements, males and females made remarks

that focused upon the model's physical beauty and other attractive features. However, when confronted by images of African Americans, males and females were most interested in the product category or in specifically obtaining more information about the product the model was advertising.

- Ethnicity of the image (Caucasian versus African American) does not influence or play a role in determining purchase intent.

Alternative Explanations

Why would Caucasian consumers respond more positively to African American images? According to Coover and Godbold (1998), the higher ratings for the African American images may reflect an "aversive racism" or an unwillingness to indicate dislike for an African American image. Or, it is possible that their responses of the images may reflect a preference for the images that accommodate a "white identity" (Coover & Godbold, 1998). Future research should test an older and perhaps a larger sample of ethnic groups to rule out the possibility that this effect was due to the sample employed in this study. Other studies could for example, reverse the sample and determine if African American consumers will respond more positively to Caucasian images or African American images. It is possible that showing the images devoid of a product affirmed a "nonracist identity" for many of the participants and that this self-affirmation may have caused participants to respond more positively toward the "outgroup member."

Hypothesis 2 suggested that Caucasian adults would report being less interested in and likely to purchase the product when the ad features an African American rather than a Caucasian image. However, data did not reveal significant differences in ethnicity of the model and purchase intent. Recall that brand names were not visible or were removed from the ads. Many of the images were simply images without any mention of the product or representation of the product category. This, of course, explains why differences were not found. However, it should be noted that respondents were asked to respond to the question, "if the image appeared in an advertisement for your favorite product, I would, without a doubt purchase the product? 1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree. Future studies could further test the influence of ethnicity on purchase intent by using images advertising specific products and after the experimental manipulation, researchers could ask participants to "select' or pick a product of choice. The "selected" product would then be used to determine how ethnicity of an image affects purchase intentions and product liking.

Results of this study further indicate that, by far, the most dominant thought in response to Caucasian models related to the model's physical beauty, while the most dominant thought in response to African American models were thoughts related to interest in the product and obtaining more information on the product. This particular finding seems to suggest that it is possible for some ethnic images to have a general audience appeal, but the magnitude of the appeal primarily depends upon the product. Or this finding might suggest that some Caucasians have come to EXPECT black models to advertise black products and that is why they needed information about the product first. While this is highly speculative, keep in mind that participants in this study were under the notion that they were selecting an image that might effectively reach their age group. Why the concern about the product when confronted by the ethnic images and not when confronted with a Caucasian image?

Future research should explore and determine if using black models to advertise black products and placing these ads in "all-black" media primes consumer attitudes and creates a new stereotype or heuristic cue for consumers—a stereotype that communicates that African-American models are only able to sell to other African Americans. While this may be true of some products (i.e., hair relaxer), it is certainly not true of most of the products blacks use and consume (i.e., contact lenses, hand soap, toothpaste, detergent). Future research might attempt to discover whether or not people have developed schemata or conceptualized images and scripts about images, endorsers, and their associations with products.

Using the meaning transfer model, research in this area will determine if an ethnic endorser encodes particular meanings that have been transferred to the endorsed product. Since most Caucasians in the present study did not immediately dismiss the ethnic models, it could be hypothesized that some type of meaning has been transferred by ethnic images to the advertised products and this meaning communicates an idea to majority members "this is an ad for black people only." Considering data obtained in the present study, it appears as if this meaning and message might be communicated more powerfully than other forms of communication (e.g., Caucasians selling products for both blacks and whites).

Data obtained in this study suggests that when confronted by unfamiliar African American spokespersons in ads, most people look for information regarding the product before making judgments as to whether or not to attend to the advertisement. Given the data and information in the present study, future research should continue to explore the multiple roles of Caucasian and ethnic images. For example, surveys could be conducted using a standardized rating scale to discover brands and product categories that achieve wide spread appeal and rate high among a culturally diverse audience. The survey could then identify endorsers or images that might be used to draw cross-cultural appeal as well as attract attention to the ad and encourage repeat purchase.

Limitations and Implications

> *"Minorities read mainstream magazines and buy mainstream products. It's time they receive mainstream treatment"*
>
> Bowen & Schmid (1997), p. 144

The results of the present study suggest that placement of minority images in minority media may not be necessary, for some particular products. The fact that people thought about the product first when exposed to African American models suggests that people may not look to the image to decide if a product matches some aspect of the self, but may use information about the product and product features to influence decision-making. Since this is an exploratory study, it is suggested that the findings be interpreted with some caution.

Future research should determine and identify the relationship among ethnic product and media usage, purchase patterns, self-definition, and types of message appeals. It is possible that the way something is said can be just as significant as who is saying it. Research in this area might examine how consumers of various ethnic groups process various advertising messages. Other studies might center on understanding how motivation to think about the image effected the results of the present study.

For example, data obtained in the present study seem to suggest that participants in the relied on peripheral cues when processing or thinking about the Caucasian images. However, when confronted by

African American images, people seem to have not only thought about the image differently. And, in addition, it appears as if they elaborated on the image longer in order to determine if the image was associated with a relevant, high-involvement product. Future research could, for example, measure participants' reaction time and see if they do in fact take longer to process advertisements with ethnic images than they do for the ads with Caucasian images. Longer time spent with an ad may not only signal high involvement, but may suggest that, holding the product constant, people use two different information processing routes when elaborating on or thinking about advertising images and messages.

Studies on ELM suggest that the peripheral route is taken when a person is not motivated to really think about the message. Instead consumers use cues to determine "appropriateness" of the message. Cues used include, the attractiveness of the source or the manner (or the execution) in which the message is presented. The fact that one person thought about Caucasian images in one way and African American images in a different way seems to suggest that different information-processing routes were taken. ELM posits that the same variable can be both a central and a peripheral cue, depending on the variable's relationship to the attitude object. This might explain why the physical attractiveness of Caucasian models served as a peripheral cue in the ads used in the study, but why beauty of the African American model might have been a central cue for the product. According to Petty, Cacioppo, Sedikides, and Strathman (1988), product benefits are directly tied to enhancing attractiveness.

Future studies might design an experimental study that takes into account how people from various ethnic backgrounds perceive advertising images. Research could then explore how variables such as involvement, physical attractiveness, values and beliefs, self-definition, and group identity affect attention to ads, and ultimately product purchase intentions. Studies in this area could determine how each one of these variables affects other ethnic, or subculture populations like Asian Americans, Hispanics, and other segments in society like, religious subcultures, age cohorts, teenagers, Generation Xers, baby boomers, college students, and senior citizens.

Conclusion

The variables introduced in this study appear to have generated some interesting findings, with those concerning affective response, purchase intent and how people responded to the images being particularly intriguing. Purchase intent, it seems, is not influenced by the image; although males and females employed in the sample found the images to be relevant, both ethnic and Caucasian images did not affect the participant's purchase intentions. This finding is worthy of further investigation. Indeed, given the widespread use of physically attractive images to sell or influence product liking, images do not seem to affect consumers as much as knowing how well the product features match with aspects or features of one's self-identity.

Overall, the findings of the present study extend our knowledge of the effects of intercultural or cross-cultural advertisements. It seems, in fact, that the picture is somewhat more complicated because of the fact that images of ethnic and Caucasian people are processed differently. This, of all the findings, is a subject especially worthy of further investigation because understanding how people process images may indicate and identify other significant factors that encourage immediate response(s) to an advertisement. It may be that when processing advertisements of sole-African American images, people are able to look beyond the "looking glass," to go beyond conventional stereotypes, and make decisions based on other more rational features.

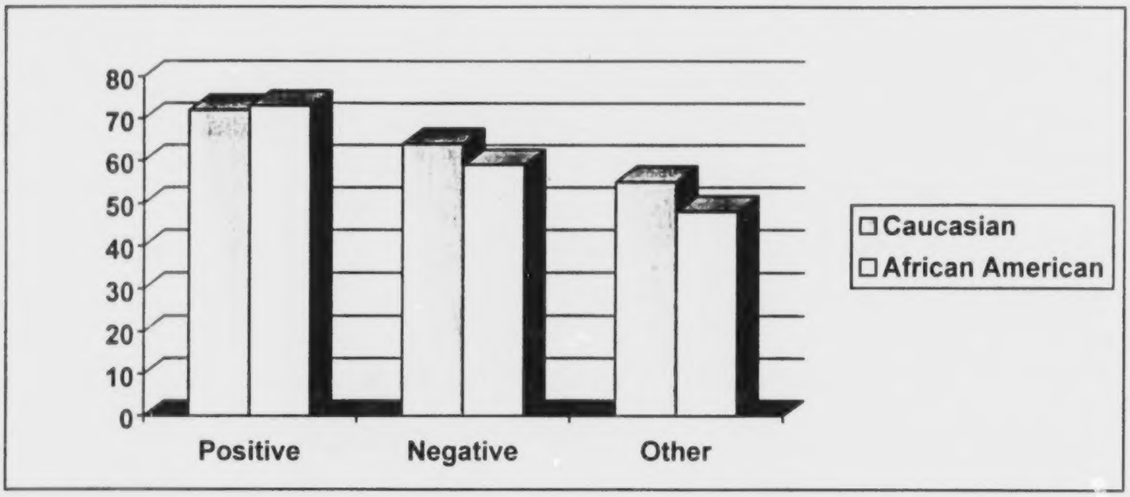
Table 1

Cross-Tabulation of Thoughts and Responses by Ethnicity of Image in the Ad[a]

	ETHNICITY OF MODEL		CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC
CATEGORY/DIMENSION	CAUCASIAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	
Affective Response			
Positive	72	73	$\chi 2 = 19.5$, d. f. = 6. **[b]
Negative	64	59	$\chi 2 = 4.3$, d. f. = 6, n.s.
Other	55	48	$\chi 2 = 34.4$, d. f. = 6, ****
Type of Thought			
Beauty	73	15	$\chi 2 = 38.1$, d. f. = 7 ***
Self-Definition	7	41	$\chi 2 = 6.6$, d. f. = 7, n. s.
Execution	59	55	$\chi 2 = 9.9$, d. f. = 6, n. s.
Product-type	12	73	$\chi 2 = 22.9$, d. f. = 5****
Other	44	34	$\chi 2 = 6.4$, d. f. = 6, n. s.

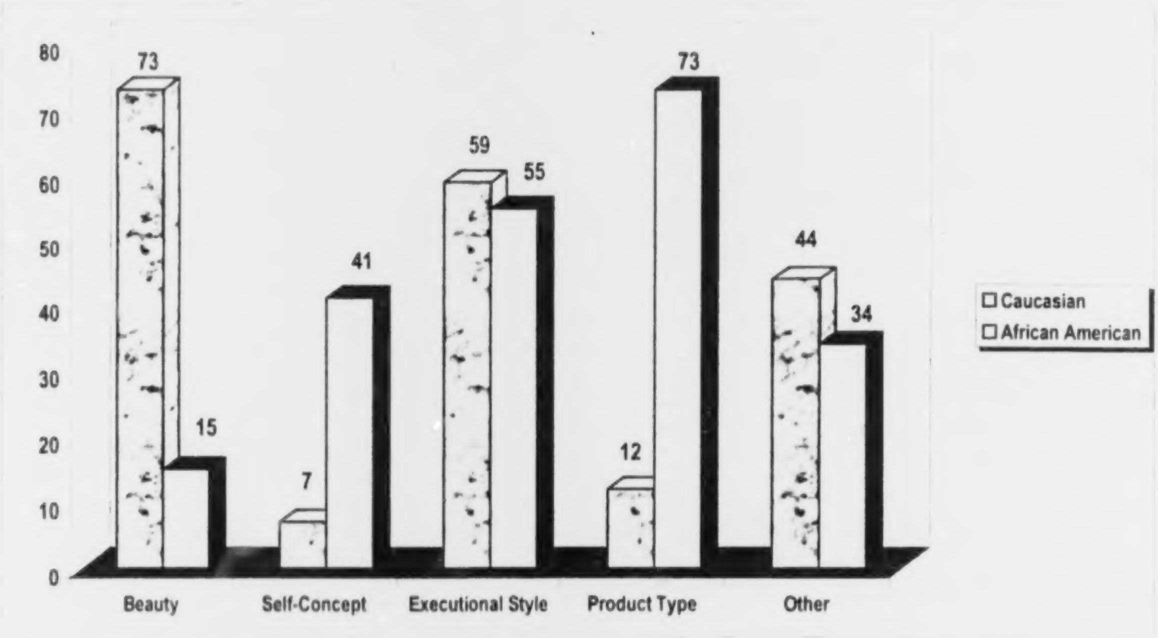
Note: [a] Numbers reflect the total number of observations occurring for each dimension within a category; [b]) Indicates statistical significance at the * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, and **** $p < .0001$ levels.

Figure 1: Emotional Response as a Function of Exposure to Caucasian and African American Images.



Note: Participants were more likely to respond positively to the African American images than Caucasian images, $\chi 2 = 19.5$, d. f. = 6. **b

Figure 2: Frequency of Thoughts Reflecting Instantaneous Reactions to Caucasian and African American Images.



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The Press and Lynchings of African Americans

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Abstract

From 1889 to 1918, over 2,500 Black persons were lynched by White vigilantes, often with unspeakable cruelty. Shamefully, virtually no research has explored the ways that the press discussed this peculiarly American crime. This paper seeks to redress the imbalance in the literature. It is concluded that mainstream newspapers frequently provided racist descriptions of Black lynchings during this period, but press coverage slowly improved over the course of the twentieth century. Directions for future research are outlined.

The Press and Lynchings of African Americans

In July, 1930, newspapermen poked around Emelle, Alabama, trying to ferret out details of the lynching of a Black man, as well as several other slayings. A few White residents who had been on hand when the men were killed refused to talk about the events to reporters from *The Tuscaloosa News*. "What the hell are you newspaper men doing here?" asked a White man who had been part of the vigilante group. "We're just killing a few negroes that we've waited too damn long about leaving for the buzzards. That's not news" (Raper, 1933, p. 67).

The White resident had that part right. During the 1930s, after thousands of African Americans had been put to death by mobs -- particularly in the South but in other regions of the country as well -- lynchings were no longer unusual or shocking events that deviated from the norm. They were, as Howard (1995) notes, "a routine, everyday sort of villainy that were primarily southern and almost always inflicted upon Black, rather than White, people" (p. 14). Approximately 4,742 individuals were lynched between 1882 and 1968; of the victims, 3,445 or 73 percent were Black (Zangrando, 1980). During the heyday of lynching, between 1889 and 1918, 3,224 individuals were lynched, of whom 2,522 or 78 percent were Black (NAACP, 1969). Typically, the victims were hung or burned to death by mobs of White vigilantes, frequently in front of thousands of spectators, many of whom would take pieces of the dead person's body as souvenirs to help remember the spectacular event.

Historians have long known about lynchings, and numerous books have been written about the subject (e.g., Brundage, 1993; Logan, 1965; Raper, 1933, Wells-Barnett, 1969; Wright, 1990). Yet, as historian Joel Williamson (1997) observed, "the writing of the history of lynching has been strangely disjointed and discontinuous. In contrast, a number of historians have made slavery the focus, virtually, of their scholarly lives...Perhaps it was easier for us Americans -- as historians and a people -- to deal with slavery than to deal with lynching, and easier still to deal with disfranchisement and segregation than to deal with either slavery or lynching" (pp. 1252, 1232).

The record of journalism and mass communication scholars is more dismal. Although there have been many studies of racial biases in the modern media (e.g., Berry & Manning-Miller, 1996; Dates & Barlow, 1990; Gandy, 1996; Martindale, 1986), and a host of scholarly investigations of the African American press during the late nineteenth century (e.g., Daniel & Huber, 1990; Hutton, 1995; Suggs, 1983), there has been virtually no research examining the ways in which the mainstream American press covered the lynching epidemic that swept the South during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In view of the paucity of research, it is not surprising that journalism history textbooks devote virtually no space to press coverage of lynchings. As it presently stands, a student who reads Emery & Emery's (1996) classic text would have absolutely no idea that many southern papers provided vicious coverage of lynchings during the late nineteenth century. Nor would the student have a clue that some American newspapers wrote editorials that defended the institution of lynching. The omission of any discussion of this prejudiced coverage, coupled with the upbeat discussion of the growth of the press during the Gilded Age (Emery & Emery, chapter 8), provides a distorted, romantic picture of American newspapers.

The time has come to set the record straight. The purpose of the present paper is to redress the imbalance in the literature by reviewing major streams of knowledge on press coverage of lynching. The news media are important in the history of lynching because they helped to uphold the social order and molded public opinion on this issue (Sloan, 1994). Drawing on historical works, secondary sources, and hundreds of newspaper accounts, I will summarize what we know about how newspapers discussed lynching on their news and editorial pages during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This period was chosen for consideration because it was the heyday of lynching in the U.S. The discussion of press reportage that follows is based on a search of dozens of books on lynching in the field of American history, examination of listings under lynching in the American History & Life Abstracts and Historical Abstracts, and a systematic review of journal articles and books on nineteenth century press history and hundreds of newspaper articles or excerpts from articles on the subject of lynching. Designed not as a quantitative study of newspaper coverage but rather as an historical review, the present paper is intended to provide a systematic analysis of the nature of newspaper coverage of lynching during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both to redress the imbalance in the field and to stimulate empirical investigations.

News and Lynchings in the Late Nineteenth Century

Everyone is familiar with the term "lynching," but what does it mean and where did it come from? Murphey (1995) differentiates lynching from other violent acts, such as homicides, legal executions, and riots, by noting that lynching is "an execution that is done outside the processes of established law by several or even many people in response to a perceived outrage, is motivated by a desire to vindicate the moral sense of the community, enjoys general public approval in the local community, and has as its target a specific person or persons" (p. 8). No one knows exactly where the word "lynching" or the related term, "lynch law," came from, though theories abound. Cutler (1905) suggests that the term arose during the Revolutionary War when a Colonel Charles Lynch of Virginia administered punishments to Tory horse thieves. Legend has it that if the thief, after having received 39 lashes, refused to shout "Liberty Forever!" he would be hung by his thumbs until he relented.

During the 1880s and 1890s, lynching of African Americans reached epidemic proportions, with the majority of lynchings occurring in the South. A voluminous historical literature has explored the roots of the southern violence that occurred during the Reconstruction period and in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century (e.g., Ayers, 1984; Brundage, 1993; Williamson, 1984).

A late twentieth century observer, schooled in hegemony or other theories that emphasize ways in which media enforce the status quo through subtle social control mechanisms (e.g., Shoemaker and Reese, 1996), might assume that the late nineteenth press refrained from covering lynchings, in much the same way that the twentieth century media shied away from covering other phenomena that fell into the sphere of deviance

(Hallin, 1986), such as the Holocaust or AIDS. However, this view assumes that lynchings fell outside the mainstream sphere of consensus, which, of course, they did not; public opinion and elites, particularly in southern communities, frequently viewed lynchings as necessary mechanisms to enforce racial norms (Clark, 1964, Shapiro, 1988; Tolnay & Beck, 1995). Thus, to report on lynchings was akin to reporting on unpleasant acts of Nature, such as earthquakes or floods; the events were unfortunate, but necessary aspects of the order of things and therefore grist for the newspaper's mill, particularly during an era in which news was developing ever more quickly into a commodity and sensational journalism was becoming a major force on the journalistic landscape (Baldasty, 1992; Dicken-Garcia, 1989). And so, it turns out that far from suppressing news about lynchings, newspapers embraced them, providing abundant, even graphic coverage of vigilante violence. As Clark (1964) observes in a book on the southern country editor, "many editors did not spare their readers' sensibilities. Whatever their motives, they (editors) wrote full, detailed accounts. Turning through many volumes for the period from 1875 to 1920 is somewhat like walking through a chamber of horrors" (p. 228).

A review of the many books and articles on lynching provides ample evidence that the horror chamber metaphor is correct. For example, consider this account from *The Springfield* (Massachusetts) *Weekly Republican* of April 28, 1899:

> Sam Holt, the murderer of Alfred Cranford and the ravisher of the latter's wife, was burned at the stake, near Newman, Ga., this afternoon, in the presence of 2000 people..Before the torch was applied to the pyre, the

> negro was deprived of his ears, fingers and genital parts of his body. He pleaded pitifully for his life while the mutilation was going on, but stood the ordeal of fire with surprising fortitude. Before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits, and even the tree upon which the wretch met his fate was torn up and disposed of as "souvenirs." The negro's heart was cut into several pieces, as was also his liver. Those unable to obtain the ghastly relics paid their more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them. Small pieces of bones went for 25 cents, and a bit of the liver crisply cooked sold for 10 cents. As soon as the negro was seen to be dead there was a tremendous struggle among the crowd, which had witnessed his tragic end, to secure the souvenirs. (Ginzburg, 1962, p. 12)

Newspapers in every region of the country provided graphic coverage of lynchings, especially those that occurred in their area. "When discussing a lynching in their particular area," notes Wright (1990) in a study of racial violence in Kentucky, "local newspapers gave all of the grisly details and, significantly, would often point out that the lynching was not the first one that had happened in their area" (p. 5). Major newspapers or metropolitan dailies sometimes described lynchings that occurred outside their geographical area. For example, the February 2, 1893 issue of *The New York Times*, under the headline "ANOTHER NEGRO BURNED," described the grisly details of the lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas. Readers learned that Smith was placed on a 10 feet-high scaffold and was tortured for 50 minutes by red-hot irons thrust against his body, after which he was set on fire and transformed from a human being to charred human remains.

It is next to impossible to locate a newspaper article that does not identify the victim as a Negro or that refrains from suggesting that the accused was guilty of the crime and therefore deserving of punishment. The above excerpt from *The Springfield Weekly Republican* refers to Sam Holt as "a wretch" and calls members of the mob who could obtain souvenirs of Holt's body "fortunate possessors" of his relics. *The New Orleans Picayune* described an African-American who was lynched in Hammond, Louisiana for robbery as a "big, burly negro" and a "Black wretch" (Logan, 1965, p. 298).

Newspapers' predilection for identifying the race of the victim and assuming guilt can be powerfully glimpsed by reading over the headlines. For example:

> A NEGRO DESPERADO LYNCHED (*Boston Evening Transcript*, July 21, 1886; cf. Logan, p. 225)
>
> NEGRO MURDERS A CITIZEN. POSSES ARE LOOKING FOR HIM AND HE WILL BE LYNCHED (*New York Times*, June 9, 1900; cf. Logan, p. 225)

Rayford Logan, who wrote the classic *The Betrayal of the Negro*, concluded that most of the southern papers he examined "assumed the guilt of a Negro who had been lynched or almost lynched"(p. 288). By contrast, Logan notes that newspapers were unlikely to make the same assumption about Whites who got into altercations with Black people. Tolnay and Beck (1995), in one of the few social scientific investigations of lynching, note that southern editors "often used sympathetic language in describing lynch mobs while reserving callous damnation for lynch victims. The southern press was extremely creative when it came to providing moral, if not legal, justification for the action of lynch mobs" (p. 261).

Some of the most rabidly vicious stories concerned lynchings that were inflicted to punish Black men for allegedly raping White women. As Ayers (1992) notes, "although most lynchings were inflicted in response to alleged murder, most of the rhetoric and justification focused intently on the so-called 'one crime,' or 'usual crime': the sexual assault of White women by Blacks. That assault sometimes involved rape, while at other times a mere look or word was enough to justify death" (p. 158). Newspapers reflected and played up these irrational fears.

The Memphis Commercial Appeal was among the most vicious of southern newspapers when it came to lynching and rape. On October 6, 1895, a front-page story described the lynching of a Black man accused of raping a White woman. Like many papers of the era, it avoided the inflammatory term "rapist" and used the term "ravisher" instead. On page 1, *The Commercial Appeal* asked:

> WHAT BECAME OF HIM?
>
> HORROR REIGNS IN FAYETTE
>
> A NEGRO RAVISHER RECEIVES THE USUAL PUNISHMENT
>
> BESTIALITY OF THE CRIME
>
> ALMOST WITHOUT A PARALLEL
>
> WHITE VICTIM OUTRAGED IN THE PRESENCE OF HER SISTERS (Logan, p. 301)

Explaining Lynching News in the Press of the Late 1800s

How can we explain this virulently racist coverage? Unquestionably, some editors harbored strong racial prejudice, and the coverage reflected their racial beliefs. However, as Clark notes, "the majority, probably large, disapproved of lynching and believed that the practice threatened the whole structure of their law and civilization" (p. 232). Thus, some variations in coverage were due to the personality and values of the editor, particularly in the South where colorful editors put their stamp on the news and editorial pages (Osthaus, 1994). Even so, there were such obvious similarities in newspaper coverage of lynchings -- e.g., the vividness and racist assumptions -- that it would seem that factors external to editors' values have to be considered. Economic factors undoubtedly influenced editorial decisions. Editors recognized that graphic coverage of lynchings could sell papers. It must be remembered that by the late 1800s, newspapers were increasingly governed by business principles; news had become less a political instrument to advance the aims of a party than a product to be shaped and molded with an eye toward increased revenue (Baldasty, 1992; Dicken-Garcia, 1989). Crime news, particularly stories of sensational lynchings of Blacks, seemed likely to attract a large audience of readers.

Public opinion also seemed to favor lynchings. Clark notes that "nearly every prisoner accused of a major crime stood convicted in the court of public opinion before he reached the prisoner's docks in the criminal courts" (p. 236). Tolnay and Beck (1995) note that "had opinion polling been as common during the lynching era as it is now, there can be little doubt about what it would have revealed about the southern public's perception of Black lynchings. Most likely, average White southerners would have described lynching as an exercise in popular justice" (p. 86).

More generally, the racism of the era, partly steeped in psychoanalytic fears (Williamson, 1984) as well as complex cultural forces (Brundage, 1993; Waldrep, 1998), pushed editors in the direction of the status quo. And so in a general sense lynchings were newsworthy. They were news not because they were unexpected "man bites dog" events, but because even the most mundane mob action could be guaranteed to contain information that would arouse prurient interest, engage racist citizens, and uphold a social order which was dependent upon the systematic oppression of Blacks by Whites.

As if this were not enough, in small southern towns the editor "ran the risk of bodily harm if he was too critical, especially if a sex crime against a female member of a good family had been punished" (Clark, 1964, p. 226). Big city newspaper editors also could reasonably expect to face violence from mobs and vigilante groups if they opposed lynching too vitriolically (Nerone, 1994). Thus, editors (that is, those who personally opposed lynching) were limited in what they could do; as human beings, they worried about what would happen to themselves and their families; as social animals they feared social ostracism if they took too strong a stand.

And yet, for all the negative portraits that appeared in the late nineteenth century press, there were hopeful signs. Some newspapers and magazines (Logan, 1965) denounced the practice of lynching Black Americans. However, as we will see, even these critical voices were tainted by their equivocal and inconsistent stands.

Anti-Lynching Voices: A Mixed Message

The Chicago Tribune was a pioneer in the anti-lynching effort. Beginning in 1882, *The Tribune* published a list of lynchings, showing the number of people killed by lynch mobs in a given year and the reasons for the deaths. *The Tribune* was one of the first papers to use the word "alleged' in a headline about lynching (Logan, 1965). Yet it too followed the custom of identifying the race of the "criminal" when he was Black, as in "Texans Lynch Wrong Negro" (Ginzburg, 1962, p. 9).

The New York Times was without question the harshest critic of lynching and provided some of the earliest denunciations. The Times was long "an outspoken foe of lynchings," Wright (1990) observes. The newspaper referred to the lynching of Richard Coleman in 1899 as "an outrage so terrible and so shameful that it can only be explained as an outbreak of popular delirium." Yet it had numerous blind spots. Stories frequently assumed the Black man was guilty. Four stories published on July 6, 1892 made this assumption, as in "Edgar Jones, the young negro who murdered Michael Tierney...was hanged by a mob" (Mindich, 1996). News articles and editorials stereotyped Blacks. On September 30, 1893, an editorial remarked that "it is true that the crime for which lynch law is even more frequently invoked than for murder is one to which the Southern negroes are peculiarly prone." The editorial not only assumed Blacks were more likely to rape than Whites, it made the questionable assumption that lynch law was more likely to be invoked for rape than murder. Thus, while *The New York Times* was clearly ahead of the curve when it came to criticizing lynching and took stands that other paper were unwilling to take, it too reflected the values of the era in several subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

Not surprisingly, the White media lagged far behind the many African American newspapers in denouncing lynching. Ida B. Wells courageously used her Memphis newspaper, *The Free Speech*, to document and condemn lynchings. After Wells wrote on May 21, 1892 that no one believes "the old thread-bare lie" that Black men assault White women and went on to criticize southern men on this issue, *The Memphis Daily Commercial Appeal* called her a "Black scoundrel," White businessmen threatened to lynch the owners of her newspaper, and creditors commandeered the newspaper's offices and sold the equipment (Nerone, 1994; Shapiro, 1988; Suggs, 1983). The mobs closed down *The Free Press*, but failed to silence Wells, who continued to rail against mob violence in other publications. John L. Mitchell, Jr., editor of *The Richmond Planet* during the 1890s, also waged a powerful campaign against lynching through his prose and political activism, helping Black people "compile their own history of White repression" (Brundage, 1991, p. 328).

In the long run, the Black journalists' frame on lynching would carry the day. White newspapers would come to adopt Black editors' views on mob violence. However, the change would not come quickly or without a fight.

Press and Public in the Twentieth Century

The dawn of the twentieth century did not usher in miraculous changes in press coverage. Many newspapers continued to cover lynchings in racist ways. For example, after the NAACP investigated a lynching in rural Georgia in 1919, *The Dublin* (Georgia) *Courier Herald* remarked that "the best thing ...(the NAACP) can do for the betterment of negroes of the country is to shut its filthy mouthpiece and organs of racial equality and die in a grave filled with hogs slops" (Brundage, 1993, p. 361).

Nonetheless, the times were changing, albeit slowly. Investigative reporter Ray Stannard Baker, the only muckraker who directed his journalistic energies to expose lynching (Beasley, 1982), described lynchings in detail in *McClure*'s in 1905 and in a book, *Following the Color Line*, published in 1908. Although Baker made statements that are glaringly offensive by today's standards (e.g., a reference to the "animal-like ferocity" of Black criminals), his work helped call Americans' attention to racial problems and was praised by W.E. B. Du Bois (Beasley, 1982). At the same time, newspapers gradually began to frame lynching less as a regrettable, but necessary, mechanism of social control and more as a "terrible form of extralegal punishment" (Clark, 1964, p. 243).

If change did not happen overnight, it did manifest itself by the second decade of the twentieth century. The change was particularly evident in the South, where newspapers had frequently supported lynchings. In 1916, *The Atlanta Constitution* -- which 17 years earlier had offered a $500 reward for the capture of Sam Holt -- sent letters to all candidates for governor, asking their opinions on lynching and the policies they would implement to curb mob violence (Brundage, 1993). In 1918, several of Georgia's urban dailies supported a state antilynching law.

Brundage (1993) observes that "as self-conscious defenders of the reputations of their communities, urban editors were all too aware of the national scorn that lynching brought upon the region" (p. 224). In Georgia in particular, "concern for...reputation and the desire to mollify regional and national critics stirred urban editors to proselytize for organized efforts to suppress lawlessness" (p. 224). Southern newspaper coverage of lynchings in the early twentieth century flowed in part from the new spirit of Progressivism that swept the South during this period. Drawing on values of social harmony, orderliness, and economic growth, a new White "commercial-civic elite" worked hard to develop civic pride and to foster a sense of urban boosterism. (cf. Brundage, 1993). Mob violence was antithetical to this spirit; importantly also, it tarnished the image of the New South that business elites -- including editors -- were working hard to cultivate.

In the North, newspaper editors were influenced by the Progressive Reform Movement, which preached values antithetical to lynching. In addition, the newly-formed NAACP pressed for federal antilynching legislation which generated news stories.

This is not to say that northern papers stopped making racist assumptions about Black people during the 1910s and 1920s. However, there were noticeable improvements in coverage. With journalism becoming ever-more professional, newspapers like *The Boston Guardian, The Baltimore Herald, The Philadelphia Enquirer, The New York Sun*, and *The New York Times* began using words like "accused" and "alleged" when describing Black victims of mob violence (see Ginzburg, 1962).

There was an upsurge in lynchings of African Americans in the 1930s, perhaps because of frustrations unleashed by the Depression (Tolnay & Beck, 1995). Newspapers were increasingly apt to criticize lynching in editorials; yet many papers persisted in running sensational stories about "lynching parties" that whipped up racial hatred (Dowd

Hall, 1979). Tragically, despite NAACP lobbying for antilynching legislation and support by Eleanor Roosevelt during the Thirties, Congress refused to pass an antilynching law. It was not until 1968 -- following the lynching of Emmet Till in 1955 (Hudson-Weems, 1994), the murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964, and the nation's horrified observation, via television, of police brutality in civil rights protests -- that Congress acted. In that year, Congress established jail terms and fines for any person who injured or killed anyone attempting to exercise his or her government-protected civil rights (Zangrando, 1980). It was the closest the nation would get to a federal antilynching law.

Conclusions

Before making concluding remarks on lynching and the press, it is important to offer a caveat. As noted earlier, I did not pore over primary sources -- i.e., nineteenth century newspapers. Thus, the validity of my conclusions rests on secondary source material. While the breadth of my search of secondary sources and the fact that the same conclusions emerged from diverse sources gives me confidence in the conclusions I reached, the fact is that original newspapers were not systematically examined. As I subsequently suggest, an examination of such material is an important task for future research. With this in mind, I move to conclusions, interpretations, and future directions.

Some might argue that newspapers -- particularly at the turn of the century, when vigilante-style justice was commonplace -- treated all victims of mob violence, White and Black, with equal ferocity. However, articles on Black lynchings had a special vitriolic quality. Newspaper stories identified the race of the accused, assumed without question that the accused person was guilty, used a number of dehumanizing terms to label the Black victim -- e.g., "wretch," "fiend," and "desperado" -- , assumed the Black person's race predisposed him to commit violent crimes, particularly rape, and sometimes self-righteously defended lynching of Black individuals. These descriptions would unquestionably fall under the category of racist discourse (e.g., Fredrickson, 1987).

There seems little doubt that press coverage of lynching had a variety of effects on news consumers. Contemporary research on media violence provides us with a few clues about newspaper impact, although one must view these as suggestive at best . Press coverage may have cultivated (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994) distorted beliefs about the prevalence of Black crime, perhaps inducing agreement with the inaccurate notion that most lynchings were carried to avenge rape. Newspaper stories may also have persuaded readers that large majorities favored lynching, thereby providing a kind of social proof (Cialdini, 1993) that lynching was an appropriate mechanism for social control.

Truth being complicated, it is also likely that the press increased awareness of the horrific nature of lynchings, particularly during the twentieth century when a number of newspapers framed lynchings as affronts to civilized society. For all their many faults, newspapers did provide society with a detailed, gruesome documentation of the lynching epidemic. They kept the issue before the public, probably helping to shape the public and elite agendas, and convincing Whites that lynching was an important national problem. Surely, one reason why over 70 percent of the nation favored antilynching legislation in 1937 (Zangrando, 1980) was that the press had helped make this an agenda item, in line with what agenda-setting theory would suggest (e.g., Iyenger & Kinder, 1987; Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

Could the mass media have done more? Such counterfactual thinking (Roese & Olson, 1995) is inevitable in such cases. Journalists are products of their times, and the news media function within and among a nexus of powerful social and economic forces. Reporters and editors are human beings who fear social opprobrium, internalize the assumptions of their culture, and worry about doing things that would bring harm to their families. Yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that the press could have done more. There were no Schindlers in the newsrooms of the late nineteenth century press. And in the twentieth century, when opposition to lynching became more normative, it is noteworthy that none of the muckrakers save one exposed mob violence for what it was, and the news media devoted their investigative resources to less controversial subjects. It seems abundantly clear that while the mainstream media fiddled and equivocated, thousands of people, mostly Black, lost their lives.

Lynching is fundamentally part of the nation's past. Yet scholarly issues persist. In light of the absence of hard scientific studies of press coverage of lynchings, it would be helpful if researchers sampled newspapers across the country to obtain quantitative facts about press biases in lynching. It would also be useful to document changes in news portrayals over time and to examine differences by region and race of the victim, as well as to explore relationships between press coverage and exogenous variables such as economic stress, in order to better probe the impact of social system variables on news content. Research could also usefully examine such issues as why certain White newspapers were more willing to criticize lynching than others, influences of the Black press on mainstream press discussions of lynching and ways that news and public opinion shaped public policy, either in a progressive or regressive direction. By documenting and explaining the role the press played in perpetuating lynching, scholars in a host of disciplines can shed needed light on a barbaric American phenomenon.

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BLACK, WHITE, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS' RESPONSES TO CULTURALLY EMBEDDED ADS

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Running Head: Culturally Embedded Ads

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BLACK, WHITE, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS' RESPONSES TO CULTURALLY EMBEDDED ADS

Abstract

Researchers digitally manipulated the race of characters in ads and the number of race specific cultural cues in the ads while maintaining all other visual features of these ads. Three hundred forty-nine black, white, Hispanic, and Asian-American adolescents evaluated black character or white character ads based on their: 1) perceived similarity to the characters in the ads; 2) identification with the characters in the ads; 3) belief that the ads were intended for them; 4) overall like/dislike of the ads; and 5) likelihood of product purchase. The findings indicate that overall white, black, Hispanic, and Asian-American adolescents' respond more favorably to black character ads than white character ads.

BLACK, WHITE, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS' RESPONSES TO CULTURALLY EMBEDDED ADS

Introduction

A major goal for product and social marketers is to reach youth with a message they trust and with which they can identify. Teenagers, particularly black teenagers, may well be the most difficult audience to reach and persuade with product and public service ads primarily because teens in general doubt messages from mainstream sources and black teens are particularly skeptical (Fost, 1993).

The critical question, then, is "How do we get adolescents to pay more attention to product and public service ads?" One answer may lie in the characters advertisers choose to use in ads. For example, the most effective way to reach black adolescents may be through the use of black characters in ads. The use of black characters in ads may be an effective way to reach other youth as well.

In addition to the use of black characters, ads may be made more effective by incorporating cultural cues. Cultural cues refer to the values, symbols, ethics, rituals, traditions, material objects, and services produced or valued by either black or white members of society, which stimulate when, where, and how they respond. Ads rich in cultural cues may be considered *culturally embedded*, which is conceptualized as the degree to which cultural cues are present in each ad. For example, black character ads that are high in cultural embeddedness are filled with black cultural cues. Black character ads that are low in cultural embeddedness contain few if any black cultural cues outside the race of the character. Like ads that simply contain black characters, culturally embedded ads may be an effective way to reach and persuade black youth.

Historically, advertisers have been reluctant to use blacks in advertisements out of fear that black characters would offend white consumers and adversely affect sales of the advertised product and other products offered by the sponsoring company (Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979; Cagley & Cardozo, 1970; Guest, 1970; Qualls & Moore, 1990). Even today, companies are afraid to use black models in mainstream advertising despite empirical research that has shown that the race of the model has little influence on white consumers (Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979; Pitts, Whalen, O'Keefe & Murray, 1989; Schlinger & Plummer, 1972; Soley, 1983; Whittler, 1991). Some researchers have argued that using black characters in ads is a waste of time and money (Wall, 1970; Schmid, 1974) because advertising messages disseminated for white consumers would effectively capture black consumers (Kern-Foxworth, 1994).

On those occasions when advertisers use black models to endorse products, they are primarily used in black media (Kern-Foxworth, 1994). When blacks appear in general market ads, they appear primarily for short time periods, in minor and background roles (Greenberg & Brand, 1994), in racially integrated groups, and in non-threatening or subordinate positions (Wilkes & Valencia, 1989). More important, few black character ads are culturally embedded. Most black character ads lack black cultural cues (e.g., vernacular, dress, images, symbols) and are often in cultural settings that are so "de-ethnicized" they are difficult for black youth to identify with (Fost, 1993). In fact, most cultural cues present in ads featuring black models reflect white cultural values (Bristol, Lee, & Hunt, 1995). These black character ads are, in other words, low in black cultural embeddedness. This method of advertising to black audiences could be enhanced by taking into account a broader set of factors; factors such as marketing to black audiences' cultural heritage (e.g., jazz, blues, gospel, foods, history), and using ads that are high in black cultural embeddedness.

While there is little if any information on the effects of high culturally embedded ads, there is a solid body of advertising research on the effects of low culturally embedded ads. Previous character race studies have used black character ads that contained few black cultural cues. They were, in other words, low in black cultural embeddedness, although they were not designated as such. Similarly, ads containing white characters have had few white cultural cues, making these ads low in white cultural embeddedness. The evidence from these studies is useful in understanding and highlighting how audiences respond to ads low in cultural embeddedness and provide insight into how audiences might react to ads high in cultural embeddedness. However, past advertising research seems to take for granted or completely ignore theoretical explanations of why either the audience or the ad character's race should make a difference in how viewers respond to media messages. For example, what theories provide a better understanding of the psychological mechanisms at work when adolescents are exposed to advertisements with black and white characters within low or high culturally embedded environments? Identification theory and distinctiveness theory are particularly relevant in addressing this issue; and, the notion of source similarity provides the conceptual framework necessary to understand and apply these theories.

Source Similarity & Racial Differences in Ad Response

Some researchers argue that ads are most effective when the symbols, characters, and values depicted in the ads are drawn from the intended audience's cultural environment (McGuire, 1984; Pitts, Whalen, O'Keefe, & Murray, 1989), which allows the audience to better identify with the message and the source of the message. Individuals who are more likely to identify with media characters (Huesman, Eron, Klein, Brice, & Fischer, 1983) and perceive themselves to be similar to media characters (Brock, 1965; Burnstein, Scotland, & Zander, 1961) are more influenced by media content in which those characters are portrayed. Studies have shown that high levels of similarity between the viewer of an ad and the characters featured in an ad increase the viewer's belief that he/she is the intended audience for the ad, which in turn leads to more positive attitudes about the ad and the product (Aaker, Brumbaugh, & Grier, 1996).

One significant cue of similarity between a viewer and the character in an ad is race or ethnicity. This may be especially true for racial and ethnic minorities for whom race/ethnicity is more salient. The race of a model in an ad may be particularly instrumental in inducing racial minorities (e.g., blacks) to infer similarity or dissimilarity (Whittler, 1989). There is evidence that black audiences are more likely to identify with, and rate more favorably, ads featuring black characters than ads featuring white characters (Choundhury & Schmid, 1974; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982; Whittler, 1991; Whittler, 1989). This is also true for other minorities such as Hispanics who seek out (Stevenson & McIntyre, 1995) and are better persuaded by Hispanic models (Boone & Kurtz, 1992). Similarly, Asian-Americans also prefer to see ads that feature characters with whom they can identify, despite beliefs that they can be reached with mainstream messages and characters (Rossman, 1994). In contrast, members of a racial majority (e.g., whites) seem to be less mindful of a model's race or ethnicity and focus on similarities between themselves and the source that are less race- or ethnic-specific (e.g., values, dress, lifestyle, appearance) as evidenced by studies which show that white audiences respond just as favorably to ads with black models as they do to ads with white models (Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979; Schlinger & Plummer, 1972; Whittler, 1991).

This discussion leads to the following conceptual hypotheses: First, the characters' race (i.e., black or white) and the cultural embeddedness (i.e., high or low) of ads will affect black adolescents' psychological responses (i.e., perceived similarity to characters, identification with characters, belief ad intended for them, ad favorability rating) to ads (see Figure 1). Second, neither the characters' race nor the ads' cultural embeddedness will affect white adolescents' psychological responses. Third, characters' race will affect Asian-American and Hispanic adolescents' psychological responses.

Theoretical Framework

Identification Theory

Identification theory (Kelman, 1961) maintains that people automatically assess their level of similarity with a source during an interaction and make similarity judgments (Hovland & Weis, 1951; Kelman, 1961). This process drives individuals to choose models based on perceived similarities between themselves and the model (Kelman, 1961; Basow & Howe, 1980). When viewers perceive that the source possesses characteristics similar to their own such as race, they begin to infer that the source will also share other characteristics, all of which lead to greater identification (Brock, 1965; Feick & Higie, 1992). Studies have shown that individuals who are more likely to identify with television characters are more affected by the media content in which those characters are engaged (Huesman, Eron, Klein, Brice & Fischer, 1983).

Among blacks (and other minorities) who maintain strong racial identities, awareness of and preference for black models (or minority models) is heightened. Racial and ethnic identity is a person's knowledge of membership in a social group and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Phinney, 1992). Ethnic and racial identity is an important component of the self-concept and can be particularly salient during adolescence (Phinney, 1992). This notion was supported by Whittler (1991) who found that black college students who identified more strongly with black culture also identified more strongly with black models in advertising compared to blacks who were low on cultural identification. Whittler's findings may explain why many black youth who maintain strong racial identities may develop stronger preferences for black models in ads.

Among white youth, strength of racial identity may play little if any role in how they respond to advertising. Phinney (1992) shows that minority group members consistently place higher importance on their racial and ethnic identity than whites. However, when "whites are the minority, they show traits like ethnic minorities in society" (p. 170). Since majority white viewers are less concerned and less conscious of race, the model's race in an ad does not seem to matter to whites (Whittler, 1989). What may be more important to white audiences is their ability to understand, relate to, and perceive similarities with black models in advertising in areas that are not just skin deep.

Viewers who do not identify with television models based on race or ethnicity may identify with other characteristics that the model possesses. Identification often occurs when individuals infer that their tastes and preferences are similar to those of the source (Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978). For instance, white, Asian-American, and Hispanic adolescents may not perceive themselves as racially similar to black models but may infer that they have other characteristics in common with black models, and thereby find black models appealing. For these youth, the simple presence of blacks in ads may invoke certain race-based stereotypes that characterize blacks as cool, hip, musical, athletic, and fashionable, many of which are highly desirable among white youth. Additionally, these youth are likely to identify with and imitate attitudes or behaviors of black models simply because the models are in a particular social group (e.g., professional athlete, actor, musician) to which they aspire (see reference group theory, Siegel & Siegel, 1957).

By and large, black viewers also choose models in the media when they observe some commonalities with these models. For black viewers, the most striking commonality is often a physical attribute like skin color. The skin color or race of an actor is a salient communicator characteristic, especially for persons concerned with racial issues or for whom racial identity is central to their concept of self. For these individuals, a model's race could be a positive cue for racially similar viewers thereby attracting more attention and promoting greater recall. This phenomenon is addressed by distinctiveness theory.

This leads to the next set of hypotheses. Black viewers will perceive themselves more similar to black characters than white characters, and more similar to black characters in high culturally embedded ads than black characters in low culturally embedded ads. Additionally, black viewers will identify more strongly with black characters than with white characters, and will identify more strongly with black characters in high culturally embedded ads than with black characters in low culturally embedded ads. For white viewers, neither the characters' race nor the cultural embeddedness of the ads will influence perceived similarity to characters or identification with characters. Asian-Americans and Hispanics--although they may be more likely to identify with their specific ethnic group more than others--will perceive themselves more similar to and identify more strongly with black characters in ads than white characters in ads.

Distinctiveness Theory

Distinctiveness theory maintains that a person's distinctive traits (e.g., African-American, red-headed) will be more salient to him or her than more prevalent traits (e.g., Caucasian, brunette) possessed by other people in the environment (McGuire, 1984; McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). This is particularly true for people who belong to a racial or ethnic group that is part of a numeric minority. Black people, for instance, would be highly aware and mindful of their race in personal and mediated situations as a result of being a numeric minority in the United States. In addition to relatively low numbers of blacks in the United States, there are also relatively few blacks in the media causing black audiences to be more sensitive to their presence in the media.

Strong support for distinctiveness theory has been shown in studies examining ethnic minority groups' responses to mass communication. Desphande and Stayman (1994) found that Hispanic Americans living in Austin (where they are an ethnic minority) were more likely to believe that a Hispanic spokesperson was trustworthy than those Hispanics living in San Antonio (where they are an ethnic majority). Similarly, Aaker and colleagues (1996) found that blacks (a minority group) had more favorable attitudes toward an ad featuring black characters than whites (a majority group) had toward an ad featuring white characters.

It appears that racial and ethnic minorities spontaneously evoke their racial and ethnic identities in social and mediated environments where their group is minimally represented. In the United States, racial and ethnic identity or consciousness appears to be of particular importance to black adolescents and other minorities, but its significance for white adolescents is low and not likely to grow until whites are no longer in the majority in specific settings (Phinney, 1992). These findings lend support to distinctiveness theory which posits that ads targeting white or black audiences will be more effective the more the racial group is in a numeric minority (Desphande & Stayman, 1994).

This discussion leads to the next set of hypotheses. Black adolescents--as a member of a minority and distinctive group--should be more mindful that they are the intended audience of ads when the ads feature black characters, particularly those black characters in high culturally embedded ads, than when the ads feature white characters. Additionally, black viewers will rate more favorably and show a stronger likelihood of purchasing products from black character ads than white character ads, particularly black character ads high in black cultural embeddedness (see Figure 1).

White adolescents--as a member of a majority and non-distinctive group--will show no difference in their belief that they are the intended audience for ads, their ratings of ads, and their likelihood of purchasing products based on the characters' race or the cultural embeddedness of the ad.

Asian-Americans and Hispanics--as members of ethnic minorities and distinctive groups--should be more likely to believe that they are the intended audience of ads featuring minority characters (i.e., black characters) than they are ads featuring majority characters (i.e., white characters). Asian-Americans and Hispanics will also rate more favorably and show a stronger likelihood of purchasing products from black character ads than white character ads.

Insert Figure 1 about here

METHOD

Design

The experiment employs a 4 x 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design. Independent variables are subjects' race (black, white, Hispanic, Asian-American), characters' race (black or white), and cultural embeddedness of the ad (high or low). The five dependent variables are: 1) perceived similarity to characters; 2) identification with characters; 3) ads intended for them; 4) ad favorability rating; and 5) likelihood of product purchase.

Subjects

Three hundred forty-nine high school students (ages 14-19) participated in the experiment: 81 blacks, 84 Asian-Americans, 92 Hispanics, and 92 whites. Ninety-five percent of the students were in the 11th or 12th grade; their median age was 17. Sixty-two percent were male and thirty-eight percent were female. Subjects were drawn from five high schools--four in Southern California and one in Northern California. An attempt was made to get high schools that were economically, educationally, and socially diverse.

Each high school principal, in cooperation with teachers, selected three to four classrooms with an average class size of thirty students. Principals at each school issued parental consent letters to the students, which described the purpose of the study. Students without parental consent were not allowed to participate in the study.

Stimulus Materials

Stimuli consisted of full-color 81/2" x 11" photographic ads for three products: Cheerios Cereal, Irish Spring Soap, and Oscar Mayer Wieners. This study examined differences in adolescents' responses to ads filled with and dominated by cultural cues. Ads rich in cultural cues were considered *culturally embedded*, which is conceptualized as the degree to which cultural cues were contained in an ad. To achieve different levels of cultural embeddedness, three product ads that contained either black or white characters were digitally manipulated to vary the race of the characters and the number of race specific cultural cues present in each ad while holding constant all other visual features (see Figure 2). For example, black character ads low in black cultural embeddedness contain few, if any black cultural cues outside the race of the character. These black character ads low in black cultural embeddedness were then digitally enhanced with the addition of several black cultural cues such as black family portraits, kinte clothes, black dolls, and African masks to create black character ads high in black cultural embeddedness.

Effort was made to use equivalent black and white cultural cues in each high culturally embedded version of the ad. For example, a picture of a white man hugging his newborn child was one of the white cultural cues added to the white character Irish Spring ad low in white cultural embeddedness to make it high in white cultural embeddedness. Similarly, a picture of a black man hugging his newborn child was added to the black character Irish Spring ad low in black cultural embeddedness when transforming it into an ad high in black cultural embeddedness. Using this innovative design, any differences in students' responses to ads with black characters or ads with white characters must be attributed to the cultural cues present in the ads.

Four ad types were created for each of the three stimulus ads and placed in 1/2-inch binders. Each binder contained only one of the four ad types. Each student was randomly assigned a binder with one of the four ad types for each product: 1) black character ads low in black cultural embeddedness (LBCE); 2) black character ads high in black cultural embeddedness (HBCE); 3) white character ads low in white cultural embeddedness (LWCE); and 4) white character ads high in white cultural embeddedness (HWCE).

Senior executives at Burrell Communication Group in Chicago, the largest black advertising firm in the country, reviewed the low and high culturally embedded ads featuring black characters, and confirmed that these ads contained cues specific to black culture. Similarly, executives at Foote, Cone, and Belding in San Francisco, a leading general market advertising firm, evaluated the low and high culturally embedded ads featuring white characters and confirmed that these ads contained cues specific to white culture. The following is a description of the four versions of each product ad (for examples see Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4):

Cheerios Cereal Ads. The Cheerios ad shows a father standing in the doorway of the son's bedroom, eating a bowl of Cheerios. The son is sitting in his bed eating a bowl of the cereal. The text reads "Nobody Can Say No to Honey Nut Cheerios." With the exception of the race of the characters, the LBCE Cheerios ad and the LWCE Cheerios ad are identical.

Three black cultural cues were digitally added to the LBCE ad to make it HBCE. On the wall is a team photo of the 1931 "Homestead Grays" from the Negro Baseball League. Another picture on the bedroom wall shows a shirtless black man with his arms raised high in the air. His wrist are handcuffed by the American flag. In large red print the caption says, "BlackLash." The last picture is a poster of a black face with the text, "Love Your Self."

Similarly, white cultural cues were added to the LWCE ad to make it HWCE. A Norman Rockwell print entitled, "The Rookie," was added to the background wall. The 1957 print shows several all white Boston Red Sox baseball players in the locker room staring at a young rookie who appears to have just joined the team. The second white cultural cue was another Norman Rockwell print entitled, "Our Heritage." This 1950 print shows two white boy scouts holding an American history book while staring in the background at a full-size picture of President George Washington praying on bended-knee. An American flag was digitally added to the lower left corner of the print.

Irish Spring Soap Ads. The Irish Spring ad shows a man posing next to a chair and a large plant. In front of the chair is a large picture of a bar of Irish Spring Sport Deodorant Soap. The text in the center of the ad reads, "Fresh & Clean with Irish Spring! The Deodorant Soap." With the exception of the character's race, both low culturally embedded ads for the white and black character are identical.

Two black cultural cues were digitally added to the background wall of the LBCE ad to make it HBCE. A large African mask was placed on the wall to right of the black character. To the right of the mask a large picture frame was hung on the background wall, which pictured a shirtless thirty-something black man hugging his newborn child. Similarly, two white cultural cues were digitally added to the background wall of the LWCE ad to make it HWCE. A picture of white hands holding a white Greek-like sculpture was added to the wall. To the left of the sculpture was a picture of a shirtless thirty-something white man hugging his newborn child.

Oscar Mayer Wieners Ads. The Oscar Mayer ad shows a man sitting in his home office desk chair with his son standing by his side. The two characters face the camera smiling. To the right of the characters is a small but wide bookshelf. On the top right of the bookshelf is a trophy and a soccer ball. On the floor next to the book shelf is a basketball and a skateboard. Directly below the father and son is the caption, "Being a Dad...doesn't come with instructions. It's trusting yourself to make the right choices. Here's one choice that's easy. Oscar Mayer!" Below the text is a picture of a hot dog on a bun with a package of Oscar Mayer Wieners pictured below. The race of the father and son was digitally altered to produce a LBCE ad and a LWCE ad.

Three black cultural cues were digitally added to produce a HBCE ad. A black family portrait was framed and placed on the bookshelf. A black female porcelain doll was inserted to the right of the family portrait. Also, a picture of several runaway black slaves walking through a forest in search of their freedom was added to the wall. Similarly, three white cultural cues were digitally added to the LWCE ad to produce a HWCE ad. Reminiscent of immigrants arriving to America, a picture of several ships passing the Statue of Liberty during a large fireworks celebration was placed on the wall above the shelf. A white family portrait was framed and placed on the bookshelf, as was a white female porcelain doll.

Insert Figures 2, 3, and 4 about here

Procedure

Students were told that they would be participating in an advertising survey designed to determine the types of ads they like best, which would enable researchers to improve the look, style, and content of those ads. After the briefing, students were randomly assigned a binder from one of the four conditions.

A total of forty 1/2-inch binders were used--one binder for each of up to forty students in each class. Ten binders contained only LBCE product ads, 10 binders contained only HBCE ads, 10 binders contained only LWCE product ads, and 10 binders contained only HWCE product ads. Each binder contained five, color, 81/2" x 11" photographic ads in clear plastic page protectors. Three products--Cheerios Cereal, Irish Spring Soap, and Oscar Mayer Wieners--made up the experimental ads while two other ads were used to disguise the purpose of the study. A questionnaire corresponding to each ad (i.e., Cheerios, Irish Spring, Oscar Mayer) was in the binder next to each ad. Subjects completed each questionnaire immediately after viewing each ad. For example, students opened the binder to the first experimental ad (e.g., Cheerios LBCE), reviewed the ad, and then completed the questionnaire pertaining to that ad. The student would then turn the page to the next ad (e.g., Irish Spring LBCE) and complete the questionnaire pertaining to that ad. This procedure continued until all five ads had been reviewed and all five questionnaires for those ads had been completed. The placement of the ads in the binders were as follows: disguise ad, Cheerios cereal ad, Irish Spring soap ad, disguise ad, and Oscar Mayer Wiener ad. The ads were positioned in the same order in each binder. At the end of the final questionnaire subjects were asked to describe the purpose of the study. Eight percent of the students indicated at least some knowledge of the study purpose and were excluded from the overall analysis. Once the questionnaires were completed, students who did not identify themselves as black, white, Asian-American, or Hispanic on the questionnaires were excluded from further analysis.

Measures

The measurement instrument collected information for five dependent variables: perceived similarity to characters, identification with characters, ads intended for them, ad favorability rating, and likelihood of purchase. Scales were developed and alpha coefficients computed to obtain the internal consistency estimates of reliability for five variables: ad favorability rating, perceived similarity, attitude toward ad, attitude toward characters, and attitude toward the product. The coefficient alphas for these scales exceeded the recommended levels of .60 (Nunally, 1978), providing evidence that these measures possessed sufficient reliability to warrant further analysis.

Overall Ad Favorability Rating Scale. For each stimulus ad an overall ad favorability rating scale was developed by averaging the mean scores from each of the following three scales: attitude toward the ad scale, attitude toward the characters scale, attitude toward the product scale. The three scales were each measured using eleven, 7-point semantic differential scales: boring/interesting, bad/good, negative/positive, useless/useful, worthless/valuable, poor/outstanding, not for me/for me, weak/strong, not appealing/appealing, not attractive/attractive, not likable/likable. The responses to all eleven items were summed to create the three attitude scales. For example, an *attitude toward the ad scale* was developed by averaging the mean scores from each of the eleven scales. These attitude scales have been used successfully in other character race studies and have shown strong evidence of being highly reliable (e.g., Deshpande & Stayman, 1994). A reliability analysis was conducted for all scales to assess the degree to which the items measured a single variable or dimension.

For the *attitude toward the ad scale*, coefficient alphas were computed for each product: Cheerios (alpha = .96), Irish Spring (alpha = .96), and Oscar Mayer (alpha = .96). For the *attitude toward the characters scale*, coefficient alphas were computed for each product: Cheerios (alpha = .96), Irish Spring (alpha = .97), and Oscar Mayer (alpha = .95). Similarly, the *attitude toward the product* scale was developed and coefficient alphas were computed: Cheerios (alpha = .96), Irish Spring (alpha = .97), and Oscar Mayer (alpha = .97).

As mentioned earlier, for each product an overall ad favorability rating scale was developed by averaging the mean scores from the following scales: attitude toward the ad scale, attitude toward the characters scale, attitude toward the product scale. The coefficient alphas for the *Cheerios overall ad favorability rating scale*, *Irish Spring overall ad favorability scale*, and the *Oscar Mayer overall ad favorability scale* were .85, .79, and .86, respectively.

Perceived Similarity Scale. The next dependent variable was perceived similarity. Students rated their degree of similarity to the characters in each ad in terms of: 1) overall lifestyle; 2) cultural background; 3) dress; 4) appearance; and 5) basic values (Whittler, 1989). A similarity scale was created by averaging the mean scores from each of the five scales. For this scale coefficient alphas were computed for each product: Cheerios (alpha = .86), Irish Spring (alpha = .89), and Oscar Mayer (alpha = .91).

Other Measures. The last three dependent variables were adolescents': 1) identification with characters; 2) their belief that ads were intended for them; and 3) likelihood of product purchase. Subjects were asked to indicate how strongly they identified with the characters in each ad (Aaker, et. al., 1996) on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (one) to very strongly (seven). The other dependent measure asked subjects to indicate whether they thought each ad was intended for them (Aaker, et. al., 1996) on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from disagree completely (one) to agree completely (seven). The last dependent variable asked adolescents to indicate the likelihood that they would purchase the product in the ad on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (one) to very likely (seven).

Race & Ethnicity of Participants. Subjects were given a list of racial and ethnic groups from which to choose. Subjects who identified with more than one racial or ethnic group were not included in the analysis.

RESULTS

The effects of characters' race and cultural embeddedness were examined for each racial/ethnic group on five dependent variables: perceived similarity to characters, identification with characters, ads intended for me, ad favorability rating, and likelihood of product purchase.

The dependent variable *perceived similarity* consisted of subjects' perceived similarity to characters in the ads based on five dimensions: overall lifestyle, cultural background, dress, appearance, and basic values. A perceived similarity scale was created by averaging the mean scores from each of the five dimensions. The dependent variable *identification with characters* refers to the strength in which subjects identified with or related to the characters in each ad. The variable *ads intended for me*, was the degree to which subjects' believed that an ad was intended for them. Overall *ad favorability rating* was the average of the mean scores from each of the following three scales: attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the characters, and attitude toward the product. The last dependent variable, *likelihood of product purchase*, referred to subjects' likelihood of buying the advertised products.

An aggregate scale composed of responses from all three ads (i.e., Cheerios cereal, Irish Spring soap, and Oscar Mayer wieners) was created for each dependent variable. For example, the mean scores for the dependent variable "identification with characters" were computed for each of the three ads. The mean scores were then summed and divided by three to produce an aggregate scale for the variable "identification with characters." Using this same procedure, aggregate scales were created for each of the five dependent variables.

While some researchers have uncovered interesting findings from consumers' responses to ads based on subjects' exposure to only one product ad (e.g., Qualls & Moore, 1990), any generalizations made may be premature since consumers often provide responses that are product-specific (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1986; Muse, 1971). Unlike past research, this study exposed each subject to three product ads. Subjects' responses for each of the three ads were aggregated so that more conclusive generalizations could be made. Aggregating the ads helped minimize the skewing effects of any one ad. That is, the aggregate scale summarized the general significance of the set of ads and may provide more conclusive information than a study with just one product ad.

The results of the experiment are presented and discussed according to the hypotheses presented earlier. A series of two-way analyses of variance for all hypotheses are given below. Only significant main effects and interactions were mentioned in the results. These same analyses are conducted for each dependent variable. The means for all independent and dependent variables are presented in Tables 1-6.

Insert Tables 1-6 about here

Aggregate Scale Similarity to Characters in Ads. The two-way ANOVA tested the prediction that there will be an interaction between cultural embeddedness and characters' race such that black adolescents will perceive themselves more similar to black characters than white characters, and more similar to black characters in high culturally embedded ads than black characters in low culturally embedded ads. For white adolescents it was predicted that neither characters' race nor cultural embeddedness will influence their perceived similarity to characters in ads. For Asian-Americans and Hispanics it was predicted that they will perceive themselves more similar to black characters in ads than white characters in ads.

The hypothesis that characters' race and cultural embeddedness would influence black subjects' perceived similarity was partially supported. No significant interaction was found between cultural embeddedness and characters' race for black adolescents. However, a significant main effect (F (3, 72) = 32.75, $p < .001$) for character's race indicated, as hypothesized, that black adolescents' perceived themselves more similar to black characters in ads (M = 4.50, SD = .24) than white characters in ads (M = 2.56, SD =

.24). Black subjects were more influenced by the race of the character than the cultural embeddedness of the ads.

Surprisingly, white subjects perception of similarity was influenced both by race of the character and cultural embeddedness of the ads. White subjects perceived themselves more similar to white characters in ads (*F* (3, 84) = 5.30, $p < .05$), but this main effect was qualified by a significant interaction between character's race and cultural embeddedness (*F* (3, 84) = 4.42, $p < .05$). This interaction indicated that white subjects perceived themselves more similar to white characters in ads high in white cultural embeddedness (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = 1.13) than they did to white characters in ads low in white cultural embeddedness (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = .95; *F* (1, 40) = 3.93, $p < .05$).

Asian-American and Hispanic students perceptions of similarity mirrored those of black students, that is, there were significant characters' race main effects for both Asian-American adolescents (*F* (3, 74) = 5.23, $p < .05$) and Hispanic adolescents (*F* (3, 85) = 6.94, $p < .01$). This revealed that Asian-American students perceived themselves more similar to black characters (*M* = 3.55, *SD* = .23) than white characters (*M* = 2.86, *SD* = .20), and Hispanic students perceived they were more similar to black characters (*M* = 3.94, *SD* = .21) than white characters (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = .22).

Aggregate Scale Identification with Characters in Ads. As hypothesized, a main effect for characters' race showed that black adolescents identified more strongly with black characters (*M* = 4.11, *SD* = .26) than they did with white characters (*M* = 2.54, SD = .26; (*F* (3, 73) = 18.00, $p < .001$). The results failed to support the hypothesis that black culturally embedded ads would influence black adolescents' identification with black characters.

Unexpectedly, white subjects were more likely to identify with black characters in ads (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = .15) than they were with white characters in ads (*M* = 2.23, *SD* = .16; *F* (3, 85) = 5.22, $p < .05$). Inconsistent with earlier predictions, neither Asian-Americans nor Hispanics identification was influenced by characters' race.

Aggregate Scale Ads Intended for Me. Although there was no significant interaction between cultural embeddedness and characters' race, a significant main effect (*F* (3, 73) = 4.24, $p < .01$) indicated that black subjects believed black character ads were more intended for them (*M* = 4.17, *SD* = .27) than white character ads (*M* = 3.05, *SD* = .27). The results supported the hypothesis that black subjects would believe ads were more intended for them when the characters were black than when the characters were white. However, the results failed to support the hypothesis that cultural embedded ads would influence blacks students' belief that ads were intended for them.

White adolescents were significantly (*F* (1, 85) = 4.24, $p < .05$) more likely to believe ads were intended for them when the characters in the ads were black but this main effect was qualified by a significant interaction between cultural embeddedness and characters' race (*F* (1, 85) = 7.43, $p < .01$). The interaction indicated that white adolescents believed that black character ads low in black cultural embeddedness were more intended for them (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = 1.11) than white character ads low in white cultural embeddedness (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = .92; *t* (44) = -3.80, $p < .001$). Additionally, white subjects believed that white character ads high in white cultural embeddedness were more intended for them (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 1.24) than white character ads low in white cultural embeddedness (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = .92; *t* (41) = 2.10, $p < .05$). These results failed to support the hypothesis that cultural embeddedness and characters' race would not influence white subjects belief of being the intended audience.

Once again Asian-American and Hispanic students perceptions mirrored those of black students. Main effects for characters' race were significant for Asian-American students (*F* (3, 74) = 7.53, $p < .01$) and Hispanics students (*F* (3, 87) = 5.49, $p < .05$). Asian-Americans believed that black character ads were more intended for them (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = .22) than white character ads (*M* = 2.72, *SD* = .19). Similarly, Hispanic students believed that black character ads were more intended for them (*M* = 3.76, *SD* = .23) than white character ads (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = .24). These results supported earlier hypotheses.

Aggregate Scale Ad Favorability Rating. The hypothesis that characters' race and cultural embeddedness would influence black subjects' rating of ads was partially supported. The cultural embeddedness of black character ads did not influence black adolescents' rating of ads. However, as hypothesized, a significant main effect (F (3, 53) = 10.77, $p < .01$) indicated that black adolescents rated ads featuring black characters more favorably (M = 4.69, SD = .28) than ads featuring white characters (M = 3.45, SD = .25).

Surprisingly, white subjects were significantly (F (3, 74) = 11.92, $p < .001$) more likely to rate ads featuring black characters more favorably (M = 3.95, SD = .15) than ads featuring white characters (M = 3.23, SD = .15). This failed to support the hypothesis that characters' race would not influence white adolescents' ad favorability ratings.

Main effects for characters' race were significant for both Asians-Americans (F (3, 65) = 12.72, $p < .001$) and Hispanics (F (3, 62) = 6.21, $p < .05$). As hypothesized, Asian-Americans rated black character ads more favorably (M = 4.23, SD = .18) than white character ads (M = 3.35, SD = .17). Similarly, Hispanics rated black character ads more favorably (M = 4.23, SD = .24) than white character ads (M = 3.43, SD = .22).

Aggregate Scale Likelihood of Purchasing Products. The results indicated that neither the characters' race nor the cultural embeddedness of the ads influenced black, white, or Hispanic adolescents' likelihood of purchasing products featured in ads. This same pattern did not hold true for Asians-American adolescents. Asian-Americans were more likely to purchase products featured in black character ads (M = 3.89, SD = .23) than products featured in white character ads (M = 3.25, SD = .20; F (3, 74) = 4.43, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study contributed to the field of advertising research by demonstrating the usefulness of an innovative design that used the latest technology to vary the race of the model and the number of race-specific cultural cues in each experimental ad. Unlike past research that has asked consumers to evaluate black and white character ads that were quite different on dimensions such as body positioning, dress, celebrity, background, and product placement, this study used digital techniques to enable the researcher to control the vast majority of extraneous variables. A computer software program was used to manipulate digitally the race of the model and the cultural cues in each ad while preserving all other visual characteristics of the ad. This procedure insured that any differences in students' responses to ads with black characters or ads with white characters must be attributed to the race-related cultural cues.

The results of this study provide information on how white, black, Hispanic, and Asian-American adolescents' respond to low and high culturally embedded ads featuring black or white characters. It was expected that for black adolescents the characters' race and the cultural embeddedness of the ads would play a significant role in mediating their responses to ads. More specifically, it was hypothesized that black adolescents would be more responsive to black character ads than white character ads, and more responsive to black character ads high in black cultural embeddedness than black character ads low in black cultural embeddedness. In contrast, it was predicted that neither the characters' race nor the cultural embeddedness of the ads would affect white adolescents' responses to ads. For Asian-American and Hispanic adolescents, it was predicted that they would respond more favorably to black character ads than white character ads. These hypotheses were partially supported.

Contrary to predictions, the findings suggest that culturally embedded ads have a stronger influence on white adolescents' responses to product ads than black adolescents' responses to ads. White adolescents perceived themselves more similar to white characters than black characters, particularly white characters in ads high in white cultural embeddedness. Despite this perception, white adolescents identified more strongly with black characters in ads than with white characters in ads, and were more likely to believe they were the target audience of black character ads than white character ads, particularly when those black character ads were low in black cultural embeddedness. Moreover, white adolescents also rated black character ads more favorably than white character ads. These findings failed to supported the hypotheses that white adolescents would display no significant difference in their responses to ads based on the character's race or the cultural embeddedness of the ads.

What appeared to be the most important predictor of adolescents' responses to product ads was the race of the character featured in the ad. For black adolescents, featuring black characters in ads significantly influenced their responses to ads. That is, black subjects were more likely to perceive themselves as more similar to black characters than white characters, and they were more likely to believe that an ad was more intended for them when it contained black characters than when the ad contained white characters. Black teenagers were also more likely to identify with black characters than with white characters, and they were more likely to rate an ad more favorably when an ad contained black characters. These findings supported the hypothesis that black subjects would respond more positively to black character ads than they would to white character ads but failed to support the hypothesis that they would respond more favorably to black character ads high in black cultural embeddedness.

Hispanic and Asian-American adolescents' responses to ads mirrored those of black students. Consistent with hypotheses, Asian-American and Hispanic students responded more positively to black character ads than white character ads. More specifically, Hispanic and Asian-American adolescents' perceived they were more similar to black characters than white characters, were more likely to believe they were the target audience of black character ads than white character ads, and rated black character ads more favorably than white character ads. For Asian-American adolescents, they were more likely to indicate a stronger likelihood of purchasing products from black character ads than white character ads.

The overall findings support identification theory which maintains people automatically assess their level of similarity with a source during an interaction and make similarity judgments (Hovland & Weis, 1951; Kelman, 1961). Black viewers perceive themselves to be similar to the models based on race. As a result, they are more likely to identify with black models, pay more attention to black models, and recall more information from black models than they are from white models with whom they are less likely to identify.

Like black adolescents, white, Hispanic and Asian-American adolescents also seem to identify with black models. Although these youth, in particular whites, may not perceive themselves as racially similarly to black models, they may perceive themselves similar to blacks in other areas such as music, dance, and fashion. As identification theory suggests, identification often occurs when individuals infer that their tastes and preferences are similar to the source (Eagly, et al., 1978). For white, Hispanic and Asian-American youth, the simple presence of black models in ads may invoke particular race-specific stereotypes that characterize blacks as urban, hip, cool, musical, athletic, and trend-setters, all of which are highly desirable among youth. These socially desirable traits may drive non-black adolescents to seek, observe, and emulate black media characters more than white characters.

Distinctiveness theory provides another explanation as to why adolescents displayed no preference for white character ads. The theory posits that individuals' distinctive traits will be more salient to them than more prevalent traits possessed by other people in the environment (McGuire, 1984). As members of a racial majority, whites are less likely to be aware of their racial identity vis-à-vis a member of a racial minority. Since white people make up a racial majority socially and in the media, they may be less mindful of their race when viewing television. In support, the findings show that white adolescents were more likely to believe that an ad was intended for them when it featured black characters than when it featured white characters. White adolescents do not maintain strong racial identities, and only when white subjects are exposed to white character ads high in cultural embeddedness do they become mindful of their race and the racial similarities that exist between them and the white characters. However, even after being exposed to white character ads high in white cultural embeddedness, white viewers displayed no preference for white character ads high in white cultural over black character ads low or high in black cultural embeddedness (except for perceived similarity).

The results for black adolescents are also consistent with distinctiveness theory (McGuire, 1984; McGuire et al., 1978). People notice characteristics that are distinctive from other people in their environment. For black viewers, being part of a racial group that is a numeric minority in America and in the media causes them to be more conscious of black models in ads. Therefore, it would be expected that black viewers would spontaneously think about their racial identities while viewing ads and, as a result, display more positive responses to black characters. Unlike whites, black adolescents need few black cultural cues in ads to summon their racial identities, as evidenced by the results which show that ads low in black cultural embeddedness were just as effective in getting black adolescents to feel that an ad was intended for them as were ads high in black cultural embeddedness.

Hispanics and Asian-Americans--as members of ethnic minorities and distinctive groups--should be more likely to identify with, and believe that they are the intended audience of ads featuring minority characters (i.e., black characters) than they are ads featuring majority characters (i.e., white characters). This may have led to stronger favorability ratings of black character ads and an increased likelihood of purchasing products from black characters.

Some of the more interesting and surprising findings pertain to non-black adolescents' responses to black character ads vis-à-vis white character ads. For example, why did white, Hispanic, and Asian-American teenagers tend to favor black character ads over white character ads? As mentioned above, the perception that blacks possess certain socially desirable traits (e.g., hip, cool, fashionable, athletic) may drive non-black adolescents to seek, observe, and emulate black media characters. This describes the notion of "cultural voyeurism." In this instance, cultural voyeurism is conceptualized as the process by which a white or non-black viewer seeks knowledge about and gratification from black characters by viewing them using a specific medium. Teenagers may seek black characters in ads and on television to gain general information about black dress, black music, and black vernacular. Because black people often set the trends in many areas like clothing, language, music, and dance, which not only dominate "U.S. youth culture but the entire global youthmarket" (p. 140, Rossman, 1994), non-black adolescents may find black characters in ads particularly appealing. As a result of race-based stereotypes and cultural voyeurism, non-black adolescents may *perceive* themselves as more similar to, and identify more with black characters than white characters on dimensions such as product use, social activities, sports, fashion, and music. For white adolescents, in particular, the desire to be cool and hip may override the importance of cultural and racial similarity to their own racial group.

Adolescents', particularly whites, desire to rebel against parental authority and white mainstream culture may provide another explanation for why adolescents find black characters appealing. During adolescence youth may shift from parental values to those that reinforce peer and non-traditional values (Larson, Kubey, & Colletti, 1989). Adolescents may align themselves with more unconventional cultures like punk culture and black hip-hop culture because these cultures speak more to their lifestyles and life issues. Whites, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans may find certain black cultural icons and symbols (e.g., rap music, hip-hop fashion) particularly fascinating since they demonstrate strong counter-cultural messages. This fascination with black culture is evident in the sale of hard-core rap albums (of which three-quarters are sold to white consumers) and black urban fashion labels like *Mecca*, and *Boss Jeans*, to white consumers (Spiegler, 1996). Future research may determine the extent to which the desire to rebel drives white adolescents' responses to black character ads.

These findings have practical implications for advertisers for whom a major goal is to reach adolescents with a message they trust and with which they identify. The findings suggest that when designing campaign messages, planners should make use of black models in order for black viewers to best attend and evaluate those messages. A public service or product advertisement with black characters improves the chances that black adolescents (and non-black adolescents) will attend to, recall, comprehend, and be persuaded by the ad.

Future research should look at the effects of Hispanic and Asian-American ethnic-specific culturally embedded ads on black, white, Hispanic, and Asian-American audiences. Moreover, future studies should examine the effects of same race- and ethnic-specific ads on adults. For example, although research suggests that the values of white adults have changed considerably over time (Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979), it is important to determine whether white adults will respond as positively to black character ads high or low in black cultural embeddedness as did white adolescents in this study. Findings from adult consumers, as with adolescent consumers, would be invaluable to companies who are now using targeted advertisements rich in black culture to reach black consumers and who would like to use the same black targeted advertisement to reach the general market.

These findings imply that, irrespective of the cultural embeddedness of ads, the use of targeted advertising to reach black consumers will continue to appeal to black and non-black consumers. While empirical research shows that white viewers seem just as likely to respond to race-targeted advertising as they would to non-targeted advertising (Fost, 1993; Pitts, et al., 1989), race and ethnicity continues to be an important characteristic that guides attention, retention, perception, and behavior for racial and ethnic minorities.

Appendix

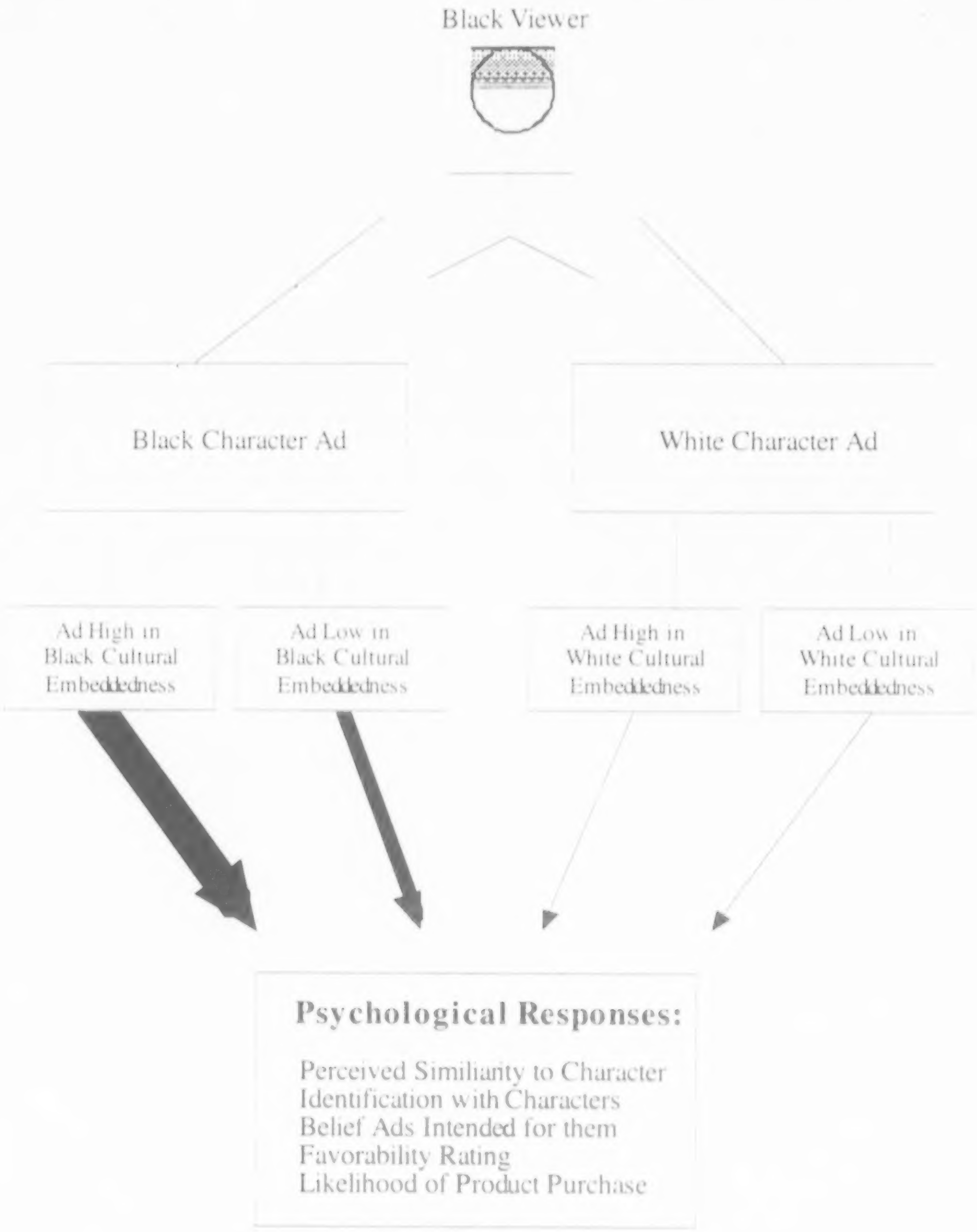
Black Viewer
Black Character Ad
White Character Ad
Ad High in Black Cultural Embeddedness
Ad Low in Black Cultural Embeddedness
Ad High in White Cultural Embeddedness
Ad Low in White Cultural Embeddedness
Psychological Responses:
Perceived Similiarity to Character
Identification with Characters
Belief Ads Intended for them
Favorability Rating
Likelihood of Product Purchase

Figure 1. Expected Predictors Influencing Adolescents' Responses to Ads

TABLE 1
Black Subjects' Mean Responses to Culturally Embedded Ads

	Black Subjects			
	White Characters		*Black Characters*	
	LWCE	*HWCE*	*LBCE*	*HBCE*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	2.50	2.61	4.46	4.54
Identification	2.60	2.47	4.14	4.09
Ads Intended for Me	2.92	3.18	4.12	4.21
Ad Favorability	3.46	3.45	4.82	4.56
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	2.64	2.82	4.58	4.77
Identification	2.60	2.75	4.50	4.19
Ads Intended for Me	3.20	3.20	4.35	4.05
Ad Favorability	3.90	3.94	5.07	5.06
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	2.09	2.24	4.07	4.28
Identification	2.40	1.95	3.53	3.95
Ads Intended for Me	2.25	2.65	4.00	4.45
Ad Favorability	2.83	3.36	4.38	4.22
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	2.73	2.52	4.77	4.56
Identification	2.80	2.58	4.53	4.05
Ads Intended for Me	3.30	3.53	4.16	4.30
Ad Favorability	3.68	3.47	4.84	4.14

TABLE 2

White Subjects' Mean Reponses to Culturally Embedded Ads

	White Subjects			
	White Characters		*Black Characters*	
	LWCE	*HWCE*	*LBCE*	*HBCE*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	3.22	3.86	3.18	2.88
Identification	2.01	2.45	2.93	2.55
Ads Intended for Me	2.30	3.00	3.45	2.84
Ad Favorability	3.09	3.37	3.89	4.00
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	3.56	4.58	3.56	3.17
Identification	2.09	3.00	3.54	3.00
Ads Intended for Me	3.00	3.38	4.17	2.96
Ad Favorability	3.50	3.89	4.16	4.12
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	2.55	2.90	2.57	2.46
Identification	1.78	1.86	2.63	2.00
Ads Intended for Me	2.00	2.86	3.25	2.44
Ad Favorability	2.71	3.00	3.62	3.70
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	3.56	4.18	3.43	3.02
Identification	2.17	2.60	2.48	2.65
Ads Intended for Me	1.91	2.85	2.78	3.13
Ad Favorability	3.17	3.40	3.40	3.79

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TABLE 3

Mean Responses for Black & White Character Ads

	White Subjects		Black Subjects	
	White Char.	*Black Char.*	*White Char.*	*Black Char.*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	3.53	3.03	3.82	4.21
Identification	2.22	2.74	2.54	4.11
Ads Intended for Me	2.63	3.14	3.04	4.17
Ad Favorability	3.22	3.95	3.45	4.71
Likelihood of Purchase	3.12	3.30	3.82	4.21
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	4.05	3.37	2.73	4.68
Identification	2.52	3.28	2.68	4.34
Ads Intended for Me	3.18	3.57	3.20	4.20
Ad Favorability	3.69	4.14	3.92	5.07
Likelihood of Purchase	3.82	4.06	4.58	4.49
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	2.72	2.51	2.17	4.18
Identification	1.82	2.32	2.18	3.74
Ads Intended for Me	2.41	2.85	2.45	4.23
Ad Favorability	2.85	3.66	3.08	4.31
Likelihood of Purchase	2.64	2.81	3.15	4.10
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	3.86	3.23	2.63	4.67
Identification	2.37	2.57	2.69	4.28
Ads Intended for Me	2.35	2.96	3.41	4.23
Ad Favorability	3.27	3.59	3.58	4.52
Likelihood of Purchase	2.95	3.04	3.90	4.13

TABLE 4

Hispanic Subjects' Mean Responses to Culturally Embedded Ads

	Hispanic Subjects			
	White Characters		*Black Characters*	
	LWCE	*HWCE*	*LBCE*	*HBCE*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	2.91	3.39	4.04	3.85
Identification	2.52	2.70	3.71	3.44
Ads Intended for Me	2.83	2.84	2.73	2.73
Ad Favorability	3.51	3.35	4.45	4.00
Ad Buy	3.71	3.91	4.17	3.18
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	3.14	3.67	4.35	4.05
Identification	3.05	3.32	3.05	3.00
Ads Intended for Me	3.36	3.77	3.86	2.42
Ad Favorability	3.83	3.78	4.48	4.31
Ad Buy	4.41	4.68	4.05	3.92
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	2.43	2.82	3.44	3.44
Identification	2.38	2.27	2.00	2.35
Ads Intended for Me	2.62	3.05	2.86	2.88
Ad Favorability	3.13	3.17	3.99	3.58
Ad Buy	3.48	3.54	3.36	3.50
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	3.28	3.48	4.32	4.05
Identification	2.71	2.86	3.27	2.85
Ads Intended for Me	3.05	4.00	3.41	3.42
Ad Favorability	3.58	3.37	4.29	3.90
Ad Buy	4.67	5.24	4.18	4.60

TABLE 5

Asian Subjects' Mean Reponses to Culturally Embedded Ads

	Asian Subjects			
	White Characters		*Black Characters*	
	LWCE	*HWCE*	*LBCE*	*HBCE*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	2.66	3.05	3.50	3.60
Identification	2.72	2.25	2.43	2.78
Ads Intended for Me	2.29	3.15	3.63	3.40
Ad Favorability	3.12	3.59	4.21	4.26
Ad Buy	3.35	3.15	3.78	4.00
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	2.99	3.80	3.75	4.00
Identification	3.13	2.90	2.81	3.28
Ads Intended for Me	3.58	3.70	3.55	4.22
Ad Favorability	3.73	4.24	4.72	4.79
Ad Buy	4.42	4.33	3.71	4.22
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	1.93	2.01	3.10	3.30
Identification	2.50	1.86	2.33	2.41
Ads Intended for Me	2.83	2.57	2.62	3.47
Ad Favorability	2.40	3.39	4.02	4.10
Ad Buy	2.92	2.76	2.62	3.19
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	3.07	3.23	3.75	3.60
Identification	2.54	2.00	2.14	2.78
Ads Intended for Me	3.37	3.29	2.29	3.44
Ad Favorability	3.52	3.40	3.59	4.08
Ad Buy	3.96	3.48	3.48	4.28

TABLE 6
Mean Responses for Black & White Character Ads

	Asian Subjects		*Hispanic Subjects*	
	White Char.	*Black Char.*	*White Char.*	*Black Char.*
Aggregate Scale				
Perceived Similarity	2.86	3.55	3.15	3.94
Identification	2.49	2.61	2.84	2.73
Ads Intended for Me	2.72	3.51	2.99	3.76
Ad Favorability	3.35	4.23	3.43	4.23
Ad Buy	3.25	3.89	3.81	3.67
Cheerios				
Perceived Similarity	3.40	3.87	3.41	4.20
Identification	3.02	3.04	3.18	3.02
Ads Intended for Me	3.63	3.83	3.57	3.14
Ad Favorability	3.98	4.76	3.81	4.40
Ad Buy	4.37	3.97	4.55	3.99
Irish Spring				
Perceived Similarity	1.97	3.20	2.62	3.44
Identification	2.18	2.38	2.33	2.17
Ads Intended for Me	2.70	3.05	2.83	2.93
Ad Favorability	2.90	4.06	3.15	3.79
Ad Buy	2.84	2.90	3.51	3.43
Oscar Meyer				
Perceived Similarity	3.15	3.68	3.38	4.19
Identification	2.27	2.46	2.79	3.06
Ads Intended for Me	3.33	2.87	3.52	3.42
Ad Favorability	3.46	3.74	3.48	4.09
Ad Buy	3.72	3.88	4.95	4.39

Figure 2
Culturally Embedded Ads for Cereal

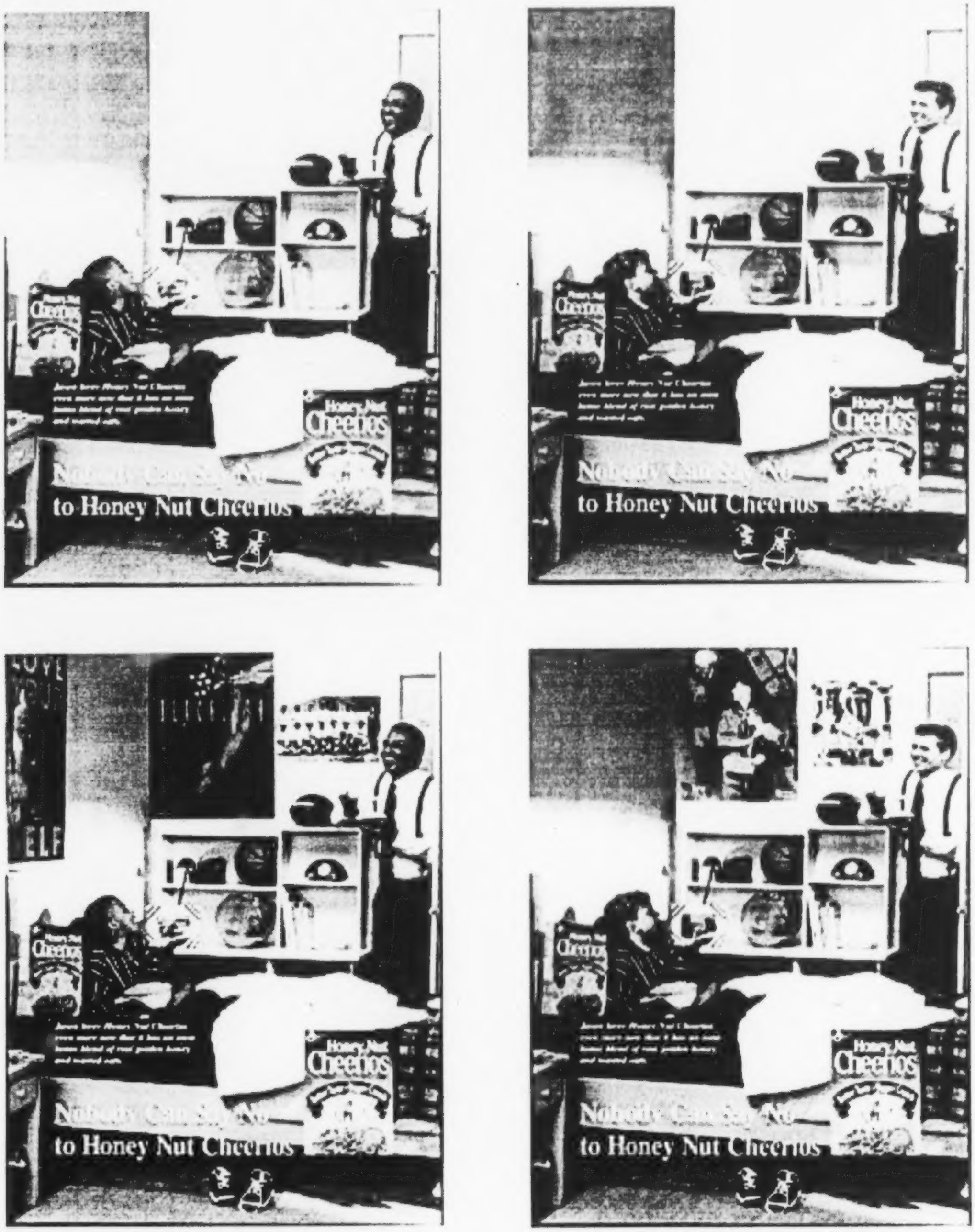

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Figure 3
Culturally Embedded Ads for Soap

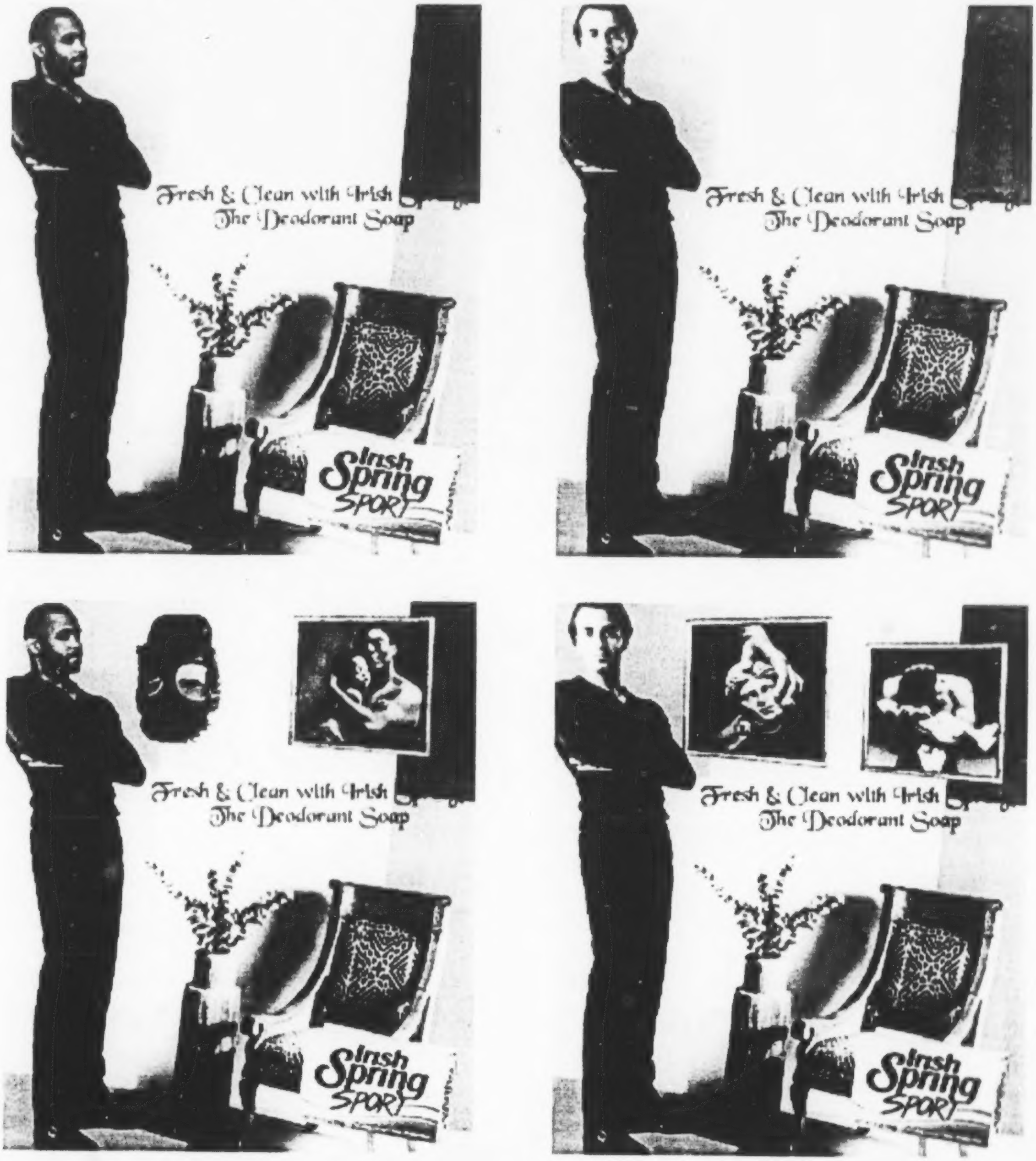

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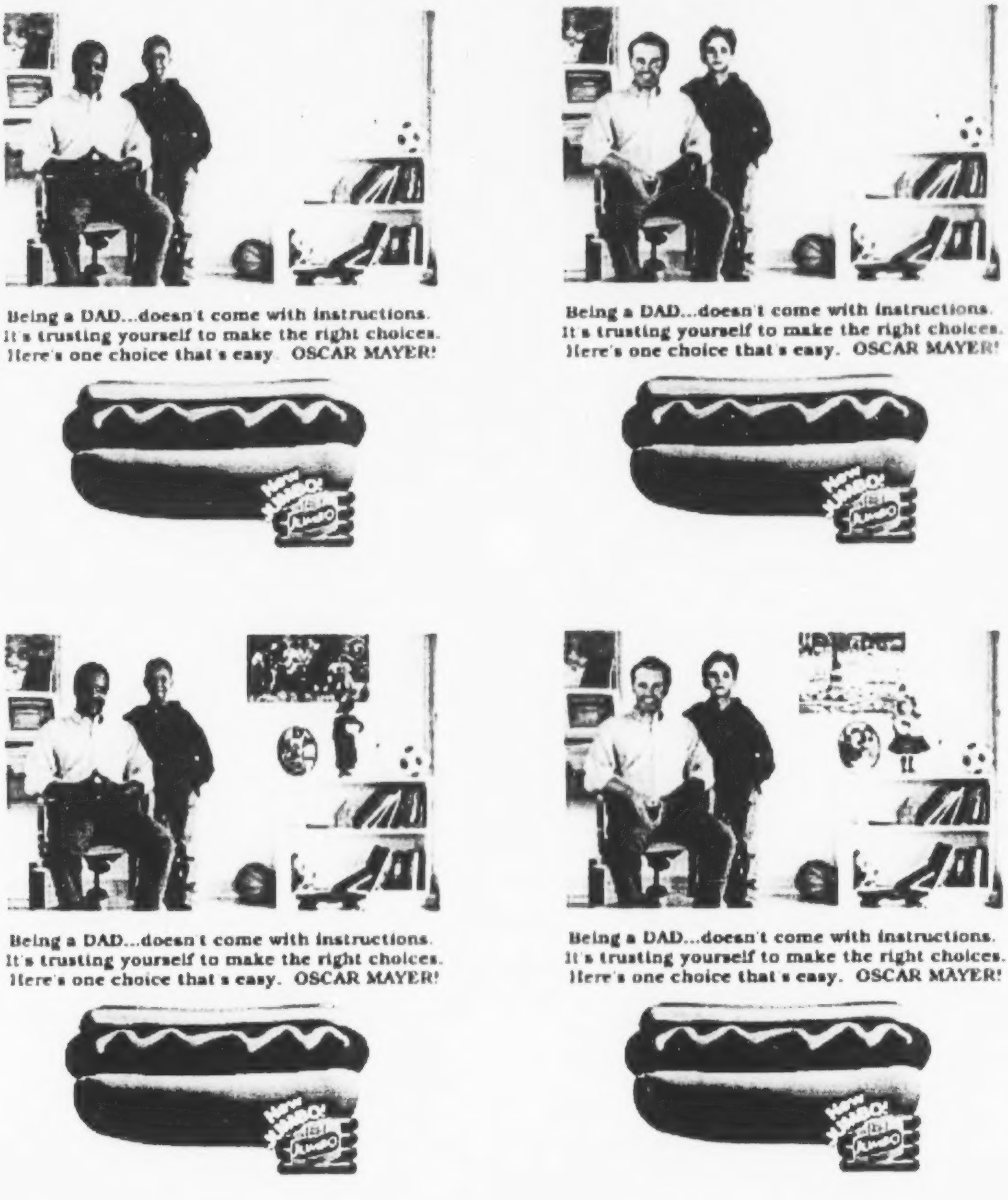
Figure 4
Culturally Embedded Ads for Wieners


Being a DAD...doesn't come with instructions.
It's trusting yourself to make the right choices.
Here's one choice that's easy. OSCAR MAYER!
New JUMBO!
Being a DAD...doesn't come with instructions.
It's trusting yourself to make the right choices.
Here's one choice that's easy. OSCAR MAYER!
New JUMBO!
Being a DAD...doesn't come with instructions.
It's trusting yourself to make the right choices.
Here's one choice that's easy. OSCAR MAYER!
New JUMBO!
Being a DAD...doesn't come with instructions.
It's trusting yourself to make the right choices.
Here's one choice that's easy. OSCAR MAYER!
New JUMBO!

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A MINORITY VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS: JULIUS F. TAYLOR AND THE 'BROAD AX' OF SALT LAKE CITY

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Seldom has a newspaper editor been so much of an outsider. Julius F. Taylor, who single-handedly produced the four-page, tabloid weekly Broad Ax from 1895 to 1899 in Salt Lake City before moving the paper to Chicago, was a minority voice in a multitude of ways. He was a liberal Democrat in a state known for its conservative traditions. He was a self-described "heathen" in a land where religion was life's organizing principle -- a non-believer in Mormon territory. Furthermore, his black skin not only made him a second-class citizen in the segregationist era of Plessy vs. Ferguson, but also marked him as having been cursed in a pre-mortal existence, according to the 19th century teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose members had settled around the Great Salt Lake in 1847.[1]

The wonder of the Broad Ax is not that it was founded, but that it stayed afloat for four years and helped make Taylor's voice heard. It would be an exaggeration to say that Taylor thrived in Utah, for he made little, if any, profit from his paper. However, his political and social commentary on the equality of men and the rights of labor sparked debate in Salt Lake City and won him public speaking engagements, earned him office in the Utah Press Association, won him friends in the hierarchy of the Mormon Church, and even brought him to the attention of 1896 presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, whom he admired greatly.

This paper is a historical examination of the founding and growth of the Broad Ax, as well as an analysis of dominant themes during the four years of its life in Utah. It relies on the complete series, available on microfilm at the University of Utah, as well as contemporary issues of the church-owned Deseret News, which printed the Broad Ax under contract and occasionally commented on its contents.

Existing scholarship on the Broad Ax in Utah focuses on the oddity and struggles of a black-owned paper in a state with a tiny African-American population. Armistead S. Pride and Clint C. Wilson II devote less than a page to Taylor's paper in their 1997 history of the black press in America. They characterized it as "fearless and outspoken" on behalf of "the common people," and noted the paper's early emphasis on (white) politics and civic affairs.[2] However, they understate the paper's status as a paper for people of color. Its columns often lectured black Utahns on reasons to switch from the party of Lincoln to the party of Jefferson; it reviewed books and scholarly articles on race relations and commented on racial prejudice in Utah; and it editorialized on the need to follow up the end of physical slavery with the end of working-class labor slavery. Other scholarship on the Broad Ax focuses on its operations in Chicago beginning in 1899. Historian Allan H. Spear describes Taylor as an "anticlerical" economic radical and opponent of the moderating influences of Booker T. Washington on race relations, but his study of the turn-of-the-century Chicago ghetto examines Taylor's newspaper briefly, and only after it had moved operations from Salt Lake City.[3] Similarly, Henry Lewis

Suggs' history of black papers in Midwestern states focuses only on Taylor's career in the Midwest.[4] Roland E. Wolseley's broad history of black papers in the United States virtually ignores Taylor, describing it merely as financially weak.[5]

Taylor's autobiographical sketches

None of the above publications offers details on Taylor's early life or the founding of his paper in Utah. Although Taylor expressed distaste for autobiographical writings by journalists, he described the highlights of his life for Utah readers, partly in response to accusations that he was a "carpet bagger." Of the family into which he was born, he related nearly nothing. He was born of "lowly origin," the son of a slave, in Virginia in 1854, and lived in Philadelphia for 12 years before moving to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1878 and Fargo, North Dakota, in 1879. There he met and married his wife, A. Emogene Taylor, an artist. He also became friends with A.W. Edwards, editor of the Fargo Daily Forum and Republican, who took an interest in developing Taylor's political sympathies and journalistic skills. Edwards used his political connections to get Taylor appointed as one of the first black grand jurors west of the Mississippi River (in Fargo, in 1885) and landed Taylor an audience with President Grover Cleveland in 1888. The Taylors, apparently childless, moved in 1889 to Chicago, where Emogene studied at the Art Institute, and from there to Salt Lake City, where they arrived on June 30, 1895. The arid, clean landscape of the Great Basin had been prescribed for Emogene's ill health, but her husband did not specify her ailment.[6] Of his education, Taylor said little, but his published essays on race and politics are liberally sprinkled with quotations from the Old and New Testaments, as well as references to Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish teachings. He also quoted at length from the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, albeit in efforts to demonstrate to black Republicans the ambivalence Lincoln felt about freedom for African-Americans in the 1850s and the early months of the Civil War. If Taylor had received little or no formal schooling as a slave child, as was the norm, it is evident that he embraced many difficult books once his education began in earnest. He quoted not only from works of abstract philosophy, but also used these quotations in clever and colorful ways in his columns analyzing current events and politics. Clearly he had an agile mind and enjoyed demonstrating his wit and wisdom.

Founding of the Broad Ax

Taylor published his first edition on August 31, 1895, the day that Salt Lake County Democrats met to nominate legislative candidates. The paper's appearance led the Deseret News to comment on the "novel distinction" of its black editor and his unusual (for the state and for his race) support for the Democratic Party, as well as the paper's "crisp and clean" appearance. It also quoted the Broad Ax on the need for political independence: "As long as the colored people align themselves with any political party for no other reason than for a prejudice or a sentiment, so long they show to the world they are not as broadminded and intelligent a class of people as they ought to be."[7]

The first issue introduced features that would continue for the rest of the paper's existence in Utah. The flag portrayed an ax starting to split a log lengthwise and the motto, "Hew to the Line."[8] A collection of "Chips" -- one-paragraph quips and observations, mostly about politics -- dominated Page 2. Taylor's credo topped the second-class mail permit: "The Broad Ax will promulgate and at all times uphold the true principles of Democracy, but farmers, Catholics, Protestants, Knights of Labor, Infidels, Mormons, Republicans, Priests, or anyone else can have their say so long as their language is proper and responsibility is fixed. The Broad Ax is a newspaper whose platform is broad enough for all." Taylor promoted only one specific candidate in the first issue, for state treasurer, but beginning in the following week published the complete slate of Democratic Party candidates atop the front page.

Taylor knew he would face a struggle to make a profit. Utah had a population of 207,000 whites and only 588 blacks in 1890, and many of the latter had menial jobs that would make a newspaper subscription a disproportionally larger expense that it would have been for higher-paid whites.[9] The 1896 arrival at Fort Douglas, east of Salt Lake City, of 600 blacks -- soldiers, wives and children -- added to the potential subscription base, but only temporarily, as the "Buffalo Soldiers" of the Twenty-Fourth Infantry were transferred after three years to northern Idaho to deal with civil disturbances.[10] Compounding the difficulties of a small base of black readers were many pressures, overt and covert, on the content of the Broad Ax. These pressures are suggested by a model of influences on media content created by Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese. They postulate five concentric rings of influences, like a dart board, with the individual background of the journalist in the bull's-eye. Working outward are the journalistic routines of gathering and reporting the news; media organizational structures including the profit motive; extramedia influences such as social, economic and governmental forces in the community; and ideology, or basic beliefs, of the community in which the news medium circulates.[11] The central ring, Taylor's pugnaciousness, intelligence and integrity that eventually led to confrontations with black Republicans and white Mormons, will be discussed further below. Extra-media influences on his paper are apparent: He needed to attract money from subscriptions and advertisers despite advocating both a political philosophy foreign to his primary audience of black, Republican Utahns, and his non-endorsement of the theocratic culture of his secondary, white Democratic audience. Taylor's dilemma was to engage readers and stir them up enough to have them challenge their long-held beliefs, without angering them to the point of ignoring or even boycotting the paper. He attempted to move the issue of racial and religious allegiance to particular political parties from the realm of unquestioned faith to the realm of legitimate debate.

Taylor tried to downplay the financial concerns at the heart of any independent news medium. He was willing to run his operation at a minimal profit or even a temporary loss in order to promote the Democratic Party, relying in lean times on his wife's art instruction classes to raise income. He received no money from the state Democratic Committee,[12] relying instead on circulation and advertising. A year's subscription to the Broad Ax cost $2, but receipts from circulation were slow and uncertain in arriving. While he reported that 1,000 people read the first issue of the Broad Ax, fewer than 100 subscribers could be signed up in the first few weeks.[13] The city at the time had hardly any black Democrats, and Taylor named only one, a popular barber. Many readers initially were drawn to the paper not as a mainstream Democratic organ, but as a curiosity.[14]

Taylor gave away copies to every African-American male in Salt Lake City and to many whites throughout Utah to help raise interest,[15] and he regularly traveled throughout Utah to sign up readers statewide, but he still faced the problem of having them make good on their subscription debts after they had agreed to purchase a few months or a year's worth of the paper. (He advertised for a bill collector in spring of 1896 and occasionally printed blurbs belittling those who had failed to make good on their debts.)[16] Advertisements for the Mormon-run Z.C.M.I. general store, a grocer and a clothing store occupied about a third of the four-page tabloid first issue.

Taylor avoided straight news reporting of significant events, leaving that to the daily Deseret News and Salt Lake Tribune. Instead, he filled his pages with calmly reasoned political commentary, punctuated by playful insults at opposition parties. Four themes dominate the four years of publication:

- Support for the liberal, Free Silver branch of the Democratic Party, especially as championed by William Jennings Bryan.
- Party allegiances based on rational choice, as opposed to parties dominated by political or religious bosses who took voting blocs for granted.

- Tolerance in race relations, coupled with gradual steps toward true racial equality (a position closer to the ideology of Booker T. Washington than Taylor later would espouse).
- And finally, tolerance among all religious faiths.

These themes helped the Broad Ax gain a voice in Utah politics, but eventually contributed to Taylor's decision to leave the state, driven by his ambition to increase his work on behalf of Bryan and his disappointment at the state's white, Mormon dominance of politics, which he could not crack. The themes are examined in detail below.

Politics and the Broad Ax

Taylor's first issue declared him to be a proponent of inflating the nation's currency by moving from the gold standard to a "bimetallic" foundation for paper currency. This proposal, popular among farmers and debtors hurt by the depression of the mid-1890s, was endorsed by many Utahns because it would stimulate the state's mining industry. Often referred to as the "free silver" movement, it would ensure that each dollar in circulation would be backed by a dollar's worth of gold or silver, with the silver-gold ratio set at sixteen to one.[17] Republicans and conservative Democrats, the latter including President Cleveland, opposed bimetallism as inflationary. "Money power" had imposed a new form of slavery on laborers, Taylor wrote in the paper's second month. "The Republican party . . . has become the willing tool of capitalists, who have become the owners of toiling millions of white and black men, and have expanded their wealth and influence until they are absolute in their power, both in the financial and political arena. . . . Let us kill the tiger of financial rapacity."[18]

He became one of the nation's first editors to call for the election of Bryan as president, first as the leader of an "American Silver Ticket" and later on the Democratic Party slate. A full year before the 1896 election, he asked readers what they thought of Bryan as president or as vice president.[19] Bryan thanked Taylor with a letter published in the Broad Ax in December 1895.[20]

Taylor favored a free silver platform because he believed it would benefit the working class whom he considered to be his readers. He favored its champion, Bryan, because of the candidate's personal qualities. In June 1896, during the week of Bryan's winning the Democratic nomination, Taylor described the Nebraskan as "an ideal American, in the prime and vigor of life, an eloquent and persistent defender of the cause of silver." The adoption of a Free Silver platform was a victory in the battle between "the people and the politicians; between patriotism and partisanism; between the earnest cry of the millions of oppressed Americans and the hoarse roar of the vultures of Lombard and Wall streets."[21] Upon meeting Bryan in 1897, when the defeated candidate visited Salt Lake City, Taylor rhapsodized that he was "one of the greatest men on this continent," due to his "Democratic simplicity" and "plain matter of fact way."[22]

Of particular interest to Taylor during the 1896 campaign was Bryan's letter of acceptance of the nomination, which he reprinted in the Broad Ax. Bryan's assertion that "all men, being created equal, are entitled to equal consideration at the hands of the Government" touched his sympathies. Taylor's political philosophy reasoned that citizens who were vulnerable to the abuses of their governments and fellow citizens merely because they had an "unequal start in the race of life," should be protected by the powers of law and justice. This theme was reflected in Taylor's support for Cuban independence, as he viewed the native population as second-class citizens of Spain, and in his calls for civil service reform to eliminate sinecures beyond the reach of government or citizen oversight.[23] It also was reflected in the construction of his arguments against lynching. Several times during his stay in Utah, Taylor's paper printed the national statistics on lynching, pointing out that while the preponderance of victims were black, he condemned it "under *any* circumstances" [emphasis in the original]. "[I]t is not less wrong when perpetrated upon a *white* man in a *Northern* State than when it is resorted to by a *Southern* community upon a *Negro* rapist or murderer."[24]

This philosophy also was evident in his demands for black representation on political committees and offices in Salt Lake City. One weapon he used in his attempt to switch black Republicans to the Democratic Party was to point out that the GOP city convention of 1895, and subsequent Republican caucuses, nominated candidates of all religions and ethnic backgrounds -- except African-Americans. Taylor blamed both white prejudice and black meekness for this oversight. "We know a number of our race in this city, who are as well qualified in every way to fill an office, as many who are now running . . . but of course they are not available, and they never will be. It takes greed, gall, and gold to get an office in the G.O.P. and these are things the colored boys of Salt Lake are short of."[25] His efforts to promote black representation in local and state government were more of an effort to sour relations between Utah's African-Americans and the Republican Party than a firebrand's call for political upheaval. The times were against him, and his view of the path to improving race relations was more moderate than he let on. He expressed admiration for Washington's Tuskegee plan emphasizing black education, self-improvement and practical self-reliance, announcing in the Broad Ax that he was sending ten to fifteen copies of every paper to the Tuskegee Institute. Later, after leaving Utah in disappointment, his opinion of Washington worsened. Taylor would move away from moderation in racial matters while Washington became more involved in Republican politics. Taylor referred to Washington in the first decade of the twentieth century as "the greatest white man's 'Nigger' in the world" and "the Great Beggar of Tuskegee."[26]

Racial Tolerance and Political Allegiances

Taylor reached out to working-class black Republicans and working-class and middle-class whites of all parties; he reserved his insults mainly for Utah's black figureheads in the G.O.P. Most notably, he carried on a feud with the black editor of another Salt Lake City paper, William W. Taylor (no relation) of the Republican Utah Plain Dealer, which also began publishing in 1895. Pride and Wilson have noted that the two papers routinely said unpleasant things of each other without noting the origin of the personal issues in dispute.[27] Both editors welcomed the fight. Julius Taylor apparently began the discord by embarrassing his counterpart. Two weeks after the Broad Ax began publication, Salt Lake City's Lincoln Club of black Republicans considered a motion to censure the Broad Ax. Taylor reported that during debate on the question, which ultimately was defeated, William Taylor refused to go on record opposing the motion against a fellow black journalist. The Broad Ax said he kept silent out of fear of losing his party-supported editor's job, and called William's paper the "Double Dealer."[28] The two editors traded insults regularly after that. At one point, William referred to his counterpart as "a yelping cur," with Julius responding by prominently reprinting a notice that William was being sued for failing to repay a debt of $500.[29] William Taylor was more than a footnote in his role as editor and Republican adversary to Julius Taylor. Despite the Broad Ax's suggestions that he was a Republican lackey, William Taylor outspokenly championed civil rights for black Utahns in his bid for a seat in the Utah Legislature in 1896. He said that his goal, if elected, was to ensure that blacks could "go anywhere, so long as they pay their money and act like gentlemen and ladies in [Salt Lake City] -- in restaurants, in the hotels, in the theatres and so forth." Evidence of the disapproval of racial equality by the white majority can be found in the Salt Lake Tribune, which complained to the War Department at that time about the stationing of black soldiers at nearby Fort Douglas. Still, William Taylor must have been an effective speaker and campaigner; his losing effort garnered more than 6,000 votes, many more than could have been cast by Utah's black population.[30]

In other dealings with African-Americans, and on the issue of race relations, the Utah editions of the Broad Ax were less confrontational than Julius Taylor's personal fight with his rival. Taylor expressed admiration for social settings in which the races could mix, and he boasted of friendships with white political and religious leaders. He viewed American blacks as a "progressive race" and cheered an 1895 speech by Louisville newspaper publisher Henry Watterson calling for an end to the hateful prejudices of the Civil War. Shed of wartime passions, African-Americans could rationally choose political candidates in their best interest and shape their future lives independent of political bosses, he believed.[31] Like Washington, Taylor viewed ignorance as the greatest threat to his race. Taylor urged in a Salt Lake City speech that all laboring people should read and educate themselves as a first step toward forging the united effort and united purpose that would secure their rights.[32]

Yet Taylor was not militant in seeking such rights immediately. He wrote that white Utah residents generally were "honest, kind hearted and generous." However, the fact that many business owners and restaurateurs were bigots who refused to serve non-whites did not stir him to join William Taylor's call for action. Julius Taylor argued that it would be proper for all white restaurants to admit black patrons, but instead of calling for a change in social mores, he compromised by asking whites-only establishments merely to post signs announcing their policies. The embarrassment of crossing a color line apparently had stung his pride, as well as that of other blacks in Salt Lake City. When he was accused by another paper of "contemptuously" trying to "inflict" himself on white people by demanding entrance to white-only establishments, Taylor replied only that he had been raised to exhibit good manners in mixed company, and therefore chose to withdraw.[33]

Religious Tolerance

Taylor also advocated a tolerance of all religions, within limits. Surely this theme in the Broad Ax was partly due to the expediency of attracting advertisements from Mormon-owned businesses and money from Mormon subscribers, and avoiding conflict with the Mormon-owned paper whose presses printed his publication. Taylor's explanation of his ethics portrays him as a humanist and deontologist, in accord with his support for the rule of law. For example, his chief objection to the Bible, he said, was that it condemned all honest and upright men and women who denied its infallibility; one could do good things and not be a Christian, and Christianity did not guarantee goodness.[34]

He had an intolerance for intolerance, which manifest itself against all obvious targets. Not being a believer in any established church,[35] Taylor could even-handedly deal with all faiths. For example, although Taylor was not an apologist for Mormons, he assaulted the Utah Presbyterian Church's decision to call for a halt to all fellowship with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Presbytery's announcement in 1896 that Mormons were hypocrites, liars and un-Christian struck Taylor as grossly overstated or untrue. But instead of giving a defense of the virtues of his Mormon friends, he struck back by focusing on the Presbyterian articles of faith that he found narrow-minded or restrictive of humanity's potential, including the doctrine of predestination.[36]

Taylor expressed a personal admiration for Wilford Woodruff, the president of the LDS church, and for the many Mormon bishops who welcomed Taylor into their homes. He even found kind words for the Book of Mormon, which he said would cause non-Mormons to liberalize their opinions about the misunderstood settlers of Utah.[37] However, he challenged the hierarchy of the LDS church whenever it attempted to mobilize political action, even arguing against statehood for Utah -- which Mormons had been seeking for nearly fifty years and which had been granted in January 1896 -- so long as the church could dominate secular affairs.[38] Such religious meddling in temporal matters was parallel to the blind allegiance of classes and races to political parties, contrary to the kind of rational, free choice he championed.

Taylor's paper had two major conflicts with the Mormon Church. The first occurred as a result of the church's General Conference in April 1896. Some of the speakers at the conference urged a closer linking of church and state than Taylor thought appropriate. The church's First Presidency, apostles and other leaders issued a joint statement that said any church official considering a race for public office should "apply to the proper authorities and learn from them whether he can, consistently with the obligations already entered into with the Church upon assuming his office, take upon himself the added duties and labors and responsibility of the new position."[39] In separate remarks, Elder Abraham H. Cannon said that only good, noble and virtuous men should hold office. Although he did not describe how these men would be recognized for their qualifications, he pointed out the consistent benefits of having church leaders directing worldly affairs.[40] Taylor considered the church's position "harmful" and "un-American," and likened the conference's manifesto to the Roman Catholic belief in the pope's power, in speaking on behalf of the church, to make infallible decisions. If a church could dictate who could and could not be a political candidate, he said, it could "dictate how and for whom he should vote," leading to ecclesiastical domination. He closed: "If we are to live under the dictation of any church, then we say, tear down the stars and stripes; surrender our self-government, and let the sable banner of superstition and oppression wave in triumph." He called on Mormons themselves to solve their own problem.[41] However, this episode prompted no rejoinder from the church-owned Deseret News.

The second conflict occurred in the spring of 1899, when Taylor attacked the Bible on the front page of the Broad Ax. Taylor began by questioning the divine origins of Jesus, and then responded to a call by black ministers in Salt Lake City for days of prayer over white-on-black violence throughout the nation, including the rise of lynching. He said that while he respected people who believed in prayer, he found it "unfruitful" and less effective than self-reliant action.[42] That touched off a published debate between the Deseret News and the Broad Ax over what the Bible said about Jesus. Taylor declared that religious scholars such as his critics at the News had made the Bible into a fetish of worship, finding their justification of polygamy, damnation, baptism and election on every page. He then confessed that his years of study of the Bible had been wasted. The News readily agreed with that statement in an editorial ridiculing Taylor's "alleged learning."[43]

The Broad Ax contained many other episodes of Taylor's needling the church and its followers for actions he considered undemocratic, such as the removal of a onetime Democratic Party senatorial candidate from church office in 1896 for being "out of harmony" with his fellow apostles, and the distribution of a pamphlet in 1897 that said the Mormon Church was the voice of God in all things.[44] Taylor disliked the News, as official organ of the church, for taking any stand that would imply church pressure on a political body or on an individual to vote in a certain way. He could not reconcile the News' First Amendment right to publish opinion with the separation of church and state as spelled out in the U.S. and Utah constitutions. In a twist of logic, he would have preferred the News to be silent on political issues -- curious, because he touted the rationality of voters to identify their interests in a marketplace of ideas, yet he wished to keep some ideas out of circulation. Taylor should have known the impracticality of his message. A minority voice calling for the silence of the majority would have little success in Utah.

A break in civil relations between the church and Broad Ax may have occurred in June 1899, Taylor's last month in the state, and precipitated his departure. In that month, Taylor urged readers to peruse a vehemently and humorously anti-Mormon periodical, Lucifer's

Lantern. Letters in issues No. 5 and 6 were "well worth reading by all who have never had the opportunity of doing so ere this," he said.[45] To openly advocate that Utah readers seek out the publications of the enemy would have antagonized the church. Taylor knew this and evidently did not care.

Decline of Utah's Broad Ax

In July, Taylor and his wife moved to Chicago and began publishing the Broad Ax in a new environment. The disputes with the News probably played a key role in Taylor's decision to leave, as they highlighted the importance of religion among potential newspaper supporters and readers. But financial, career and political decisions contributed to the move as well. All of these factors fit the Shoemaker-Reese model of influences of content.

Taylor's apparent reason for leaving Utah appears in the August 12, 1899 edition, the fourth Broad Ax published in Chicago. In a column of comment by other newspapers about the relocation, the Pueblo (Colo.) Tribune said Taylor moved to a larger stage in order to contribute more to Bryan's 1900 presidential campaign.[46] Taylor's republishing the item gives it his tacit endorsement, and the move would make sense considering his adoration of Bryan. However, negative pressures as well as positive inducements had been at work. Despite winning a handful of recruits, Taylor did little to alter the political alignment of the majority of African-Americans in Utah. If he was accurate in his estimate of 500 blacks living in Salt Lake City, then his boast of having lined up two black women to speak on Bryan's behalf in the 1896 election and finding seven black men to work for the Democratic Party in that year was only a minor victory. In addition, racial intolerance galled him, and he likely felt that he would have had more social opportunities in a big city with a larger black population.

On the positive side, Taylor had made advances in circulation and prestige for his paper between 1895 and 1899. He had been become an officer in the Utah Press Association and was a member of the Western Negro Press Association. He had been invited to give speeches to church, women's and political clubs in Salt Lake City and counted some of the Mormon Church's top officials as his friends. He even had hosted a mixed-race banquet for more than 200 people to coincide with the 1898 election.[47] But he still had been unable to establish the Broad Ax as profitable. As much as he might feel accepted in a few social and political circles, his paper had reached its maximum circulation and influence. He claimed a circulation of about 1,000, but many of his readers did not pay, and he struggled to break even.[48] Some black readers could ill afford a subscription, being mainly ex-slaves, servants and adventurers.[49] He had difficulties in attracting advertising, too. Display ads for the Mormon-run Z.C.M.I. department store disappeared after the first issue, and after Taylor's stated objections to the Bible and to church influence on politics, it was not likely that such ads would return. About a third of the paper usually was devoted to advertising, but ads in the later editions included legal notices and announcements for liquor stores, patent medicines, insurance agents and coal providers, as opposed to large display ads for local businesses. Non-paying house ads for the Broad Ax and Emogene Taylor's art studio also appeared regularly.

In the end, Taylor's admiration for individual members of the Mormon Church could not offset his apprehension about the role of the church in political and social life. Right or wrong, he perceived the church as meddling in public affairs and limiting the kind of open debate on political issues that he advocated. Such attitudes have remained common in Utah and difficult for the church to combat. A century after Taylor's departure from Utah, every elected federal officeholder in the state was a white Republican Mormon male. Although the LDS church officially has endorsed the two-party system, the culture's ingrained conservatism has limited the political voice of women, racial and religious minoritites, and Democrats.

Taylor's souring on minority journalism in Utah, along with the failure of his beloved Bryan at the polls in three elections, help explain the shift in his voice, from moderation, jocularity and careful argument, to the more caustic, jaded view found in the later, Chicago editions of the Broad Ax. In Chicago, Taylor practiced "preacher-baiting" and character assassination, and continued to push for radical economic reform.[50] His paper continued there for three decades. In a big city with a more heterogeneous population, Taylor's multiple-minority voice found a surer footing. It found more tolerance than it had in Utah, even as it shifted away from the advocacy of tolerance itself.

NOTES

[1] Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 171-75. Brodie traces Smith's revelation linking a dark skin with God's displeasure to the belief that all people are descended from the three sons of Noah, one of whom, Ham, received Noah's curse. Until 1978, African-Americans were denied membership in the priesthood of the Mormon Church, which was open to all white men of good standing.

[2] Armistead S. Pride and Clint C. Wilson II, A History of the Black Press (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1997), 108.

[3] Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 82-83, 114.

[4] Henry Lewis Suggs, ed., The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 21-23.

[5] Roland E. Wolseley, The Black Press, U.S.A. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), 65.

[6] See "Five Hours With Hon. Moses Thatcher," September 28, 1895; "The Tenderfoot's Apology," October 5, 1895; "To the Ladies of Salt Lake," October 5, 1895; "Kind Words," November 2, 1895; and "The Awakening of Art," November 17, 1900. All are in the Broad Ax. Unless otherwise noted, all newspaper articles referenced below appeared in that paper.

[7] "The Latest Journalistic Candidate," Deseret Evening News, August 31, 1895.

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[8] Pride and Wilson erroneously report the motto to have been, "Hew to the Line, Let the Chips Fall Where They May."

[9] Treasury Department, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1898 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 19.

[10] Quintard Taylor, In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 184,

[11] Pamela D. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content (New York: Longman, 1991), 53-207.

[12] "The Salt Lake Bee," July 30, 1898.

[13] See "Chips," September 7, 1895; and "Looking Backward," August 22, 1896.

[14] "M.B. McGee and the Broad Ax," September 18, 1897.

[15] "To Our Readers and Friends," November 9, 1895.

[16] See "Wanted," May 30, 1896; and "Nota Bene," February 5, 1899.

[17] "Salutatory," August 31, 1895

[18] "We Still Have Slavery," September 21, 1895

[19] "Chips," November 9, 1895. Later that month, Taylor also proposed that Bryan would make a good vice presidential candidate on a ticket with Senator John Morgan of Alabama.

[20] "The Broad Ax in the East and West," December 14, 1895.

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[21] "The Great Convention," July 11,1896. Bryan would carry Utah in the 1896 general election, 64,367 to 13,448, but would lose the 1900 rematch with William McKinley, beginning the state's long association with Republican politics.

[22] "William Jennings Bryan," July 24, 1896.

[23] "President Bryan's Letter," September 19, 1896.

[24] "The Dreaded Lynch Law," November 16, 1895.

[25] "The Colored Boys and the G.O.P.," October 19, 1895.

[26] See "A Good Work," May 23, 1896; and Spear, Black Chicago, 82-83.

[27] Pride and Wilson, A History of the Black Press, 108.

[28] "The Ku Klux in Salt Lake," September 14, 1896.

[29] "Bomb No. 2," March 6, 1897.

[30] See Taylor, In Search of the Racial Frontier, 176; and Allan Kent Powell, ed., Utah History Encyclopedia (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 158.

[31] "Which Will You Choose?" September 28, 1896.

[32] "Address of J.F. Taylor," October 25, 1895.

[33] See "The Colored Line in Salt Lake City," June 18, 1898; and "The Salt Lake Bee," July 20, 1898.

[34] "The Bible and Morality," February 18, 1899.

[35] "Down in SanPete Valley," February 19, 1898.

[36] "Religious Intolerance Run Mad," May 2, 1896.

[37] "J.A. Evans," May 2, 1896.

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[38] "A Crisis in Utah," October 19, 1895.

[39] "To the Saints," April 6, 1896, Deseret Evening News.

[40] "Elder Abraham H. Cannon," April 6, 1896, Deseret Evening News.

[41] See "The Manifesto," April 18, 1896; and "The Crisis Is Here," April 25, 1896.

[42] See "Is That All?" May 13, 1899, Deseret Evening News; and "Prayers," May 23, 1899.

[43] See "A Book Idol," May 30, 1899; and "Is That All?" May 30, 1899, Deseret Evening News.

[44] See "Deposing of Moses Thatcher," November 28, 1896; and "Revised Gospel concerning Church and State," September 18, 1897.

[45] "Lucifer's Lantern," June 6, 1899. For a study of the anti-Mormon themes in Lucifer's Lantern, see Kaylene D. Nelsen, "A.T. Schroeder and 'Lucifer's Lantern:' His Views on Mormonism," presented to the Southwest Symposium of the Southwest Education Council for Journalism and Mass Communication, November 1997.

[46] "Press Comments," August 12, 1899.

[47] See "Omaha and Chicago," September 3, 1898; and "The Broad Ax Banquet and Reception," November 5, 1898.

[48] "Looking Backward," August 22, 1896.

[49] Pride and Wilson, A History of the Black Press, 108.

[50] Spear, Black Chicago, 82.

The Indianapolis Recorder: A Midwestern Black Newspaper Passes Century Mark By Finding Formula for Survival

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The Indianapolis Recorder: A Midwestern Black Newspaper Passes Century Mark By Finding Formula For Survival

Introduction:

Scholarly interest in the history of African American newspapers, their content, survival rates, journalists, editors, publishers and operations has, at best, been sporadic throughout most of this country's history. As La Brie (1974) pointed out, reasons for the paucity of such scholarship include inaccessibility of materials, failure of academic leaders to encourage study, lack of knowledge by some academics, lack of interest in the field by some blacks and whites and the unimportance attached to the black press by mainstream journalism.[1] Yet in a multiracial, multicultural and multi-ethnic country, it is imperative that such scholarly work should be encouraged and conducted.

The black press, after all, provides a flavor of the life and history of African Americans beginning during slavery days and continuing even until today. The black press offers insights and perspectives often not available in the mainstream media. In the 1800s and early to mid-1900s, the black press usually provided the only news about black Americans, people who were often virtually invisible in the mainstream media. This study, therefore, looks at one of those black newspapers and how it was able to adapt and invisible in the mainstream media. This study, therefore, looks at one of those black newspapers and how it was able to adapt and survive to where it is one of only five African American newspapers to reach its second century of publication.

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[1] La Brie III, Henry G. (ed.), Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, Mercer House Press, 1974, p. 3

Literature Review

A review of the literature shows some interest in the black press, as represented by the writings of Hutton (1993), Detweiler (1922), Waters (1987), Oak (1948), Wolseley (1971), Wolseley (2nd ed., 1990) , Merrill (3rd ed., 1995), La Brie (1974), Penn (1969), Suggs (1985), Jeter, et al. (1996) and various editions of the *Editor & Publisher International Year Book.*

According to Emery and Emery (1996), *Freedom's Journal*, which made its debut March 16, 1827, was the first black newspaper published in the United States. It was edited by John B. Russwurm and the Rev. Samuel Cornish.[2] Russwurm, a legendary figure in black journalism, was this country's first African American college graduate. *Freedom's Journal* made clear its mission by declaring, "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."[3] That marked the beginning of crusading black newspapers. Others would follow, including abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who launched *The North Star* on November 1, 1847, as an anti-slavery publication.

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[2] Emery, Michael, and Edwin Emery, The Press and America (8th edition), Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, Ma., 1996, p. 127

[3] *Ibid*

Douglass said the paper's mission was "to attack slavery in all its forms and aspects; to advocate universal emancipation; to exalt the standards of public morality..."[4] It is estimated that more than 3,000 black newspapers have been published since 1827. Research by Professor Armistead Scott Pride of Lincoln University, as quoted by the Emerys, showed that 40 African American papers were founded before 1865; 1,187 appeared between 1865 and 1900; another 1,500 made their debut by 1951.[5] However, according to Pride's research, the average survival rate for many of these papers was a mere 9 years. Lack of advertising support was one of the main reasons many of the papers failed.

Although blacks, who number almost 32 million people, are the largest ethnic minority in the United States, throughout history they have frequently found themselves largely excluded from coverage by mainstream newspapers, except in crime stories. Over time, they gravitated toward starting their own newspapers which would chronicle their successes and achievements, hopes, frustrations and dreams. But black newspapers faced economic, circulation, advertising and other problems, which often led to the deaths of their publications. Major white companies, for example, commonly excluded the black press and black radio from their advertising campaigns. Thus the early black newspaper editors felt they needed newspapers that addressed issues of concern to their particular communities in a way that the white media and white journalists could not. However, although circulation was sometimes high, there was frequently not enough advertising revenue, the lifeblood of the industry, within the black communities to sustain these newspapers.

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[4] *Ibid*, p. 129

[5] *Ibid*, p. 231

Despite all this, some African American newspapers have thrived in the years since slavery was abolished. According to Jeter, et al, as of 1996 at least four black papers had existed for more than 100 years. Another six have been around for from 78 to 97 years. The 10 oldest black newspapers in the United States (year founded in parenthesis) are *Philadelphia Tribune* (1884); *Baltimore Afro-American* (1892); *Houston Informer* (1893); *Indianapolis Recorder* (1895); *Norfolk Journal & Guide* (1900); *Pittsburgh Courier* (1905); *Chicago Defender* (1905); *Amsterdam News* (1909); *St. . Louis Argus* (1912); and *Kansas City Call* (1919).[6]

Each of these publications is illustrative of the dilemmas, successes, challenges and opportunities faced by the black media. This study focuses on the *Indianapolis Recorder.* Indianapolis, the capital of the Hoosier state of Indiana, boasts the fourth oldest African American newspaper in the country. The *Indianapolis Recorder* was established in 1895 as *The Directory,* an advertising sheet, focusing on black churches, started by George Pheldon Stewart. George Pheldon was born March 13,

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[6] Jeter, James P.., Kuldip R. Rampal, Vibert C. Cambridge and Cornelius B. Pratt, International Afro Mass Media. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1996, p.228

1874, in Vincennes, Ind., to William H., a barber, and Josephine Stewart.[7] He was the fifth of the Stewarts' eight children. George P. Stewart graduated from Vincennes High School at 17.

He was a young man when he moved from his Vincennes hometown to Indianapolis, where an older brother was living and running a small job printing shop. In Indianapolis, George Stewart became a writer, learned to set type and eventually bought his brother's print shop. He also met and married Fannie Belle Caldwell, who was born in Louisville, Ky., in September 1898 in Indianapolis. They had six children, Joyce, Marcus (who later became the paper's managing editor), Fredonia and Theodore (twins), Henry and Clarence.

There has been a dispute among researchers as to when the paper was started. Some researchers have indicated that, according to a 1920 Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce survey, the *Indianapolis Recorder* was first published in 1897. However, the consensus seems to be that it should be dated back to 1895 when its predecessor, *The Directory,* first made its appearance. Stewart and Will H. Porter were co-founders of the *Recorder.* But in 1899, Porter sold his share in the paper for $300 to Stewart, who became sole proprietor. Stewart would remain editor and publisher of the *Recorder* until his 1924 death.

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[7] Notes from the George P. Stewart Collection, Indiana Historic Society, Indianapolis, Ind.

The *Recorder* was not the first black paper founded in Indianapolis. It was preceded by the births of *Colored World* and *Indianapolis Freeman*, both of which first appeared in the 1880s. In time, both papers folded, leaving the *Recorder* alone.

Research Question

Thousands of black newspapers have been founded over the years in the United States. Many of these have failed. *The Indianapolis Recorder* is one of only five black newspapers to have survived for more than 100 years. But why did the *Indianapolis Recorder* survive while its Indianapolis competitors perished? Why has *The Indianapolis Recorder* been around for more than 100 years while so many other African American newspapers around the country have averaged a life span of 9 years?

To under these questions, this paper will examine the history and success of the *Recorder* as an example of what it took then and takes now for an African American newspaper to survive, including its post-George Stewart transformation from a black, stridently pro-Republican weekly to a politically independent publication with a significant white readership.. Charles Blair, current president and editor of the *Recorder* until 1998, said:

> There are a number of reasons why we have made it and why some other black newspapers have made it. In the past, ads made up very little of our revenue. Many major department stores and other major businesses did not advertise with us. So black newspapers had to rely more on circulation sales. Papers that relied on ads in those days would not exist today.

> Now, we have shifted the odds. Just like in the majority papers, ads are now the main source of revenue. Now ads make up 90 percent of our revenues. Paper sales account for 10 percent. Most successful black papers today are no longer circulation driven. Most of those black papers that can't or won't change and do not rely on advertising can't exist today. It's that simple.[8]

Blair said the paper's focus on local and community news was one of the main reasons for its longevity.

> Our main focus has been on local news, news that affects our community. We don't do much on national and international issues, although we run some stories from the NNPA (the black-run National Newspaper Publishers Association).
>
> Even though the *Indianapolis Star/News* has expanded its coverage of African American news--and we applaud that--we have continued to show African Americans in a positive light. For years, the *Indianapolis Star* never did feature stories on African Americans. That can be documented. It was as if blacks did not exist as a people, except in crime stories. Now, African Americans are being covered positively. We think we have had a major impact on the major daily (paper) here in that area.[9]
>
> There was even a time when the mainstream papers would run real estate ads saying whether house and apartment owners would rent to "coloreds." We think we had some effect in ending that type of discrimination.

Blair argued, as others have done, that black newspapers were started by those who saw a need to reflect the African American experience. Conditions have changed but the need for the black press continues. Even though Indiana has been a mostly homogeneous society, predominantly white with blacks making up under 10 percent of the state's population, there was a need for black newspapers. The development of the Indiana black press has been very similar to that of the rest of the country. Indiana has had about 42 African American newspapers, of which 15 (37 percent) were established by the beginning of the 20th century.[10] Twelve more were started between 1900 and 1920, with five more between 1921 and 1940. Between 1941 and 1961, another 10 papers were established.

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[8] Personal interview, March 26, 1997, at the *Recorder* office, Indianapolis, Ind.

[9] Ibid

No Indiana city had more black newspapers than Indianapolis the Hoosier state capital, between 1884 and 1985. At least 12 of them, regular, irregular, weekly, monthly, *The Argus, Freeman, The Indiana* (later *The Hoosier*) *Herald, The Mid-Western Post, The Indiana Herald-Times, The Leader, The Ledger, Indianapolis Recorder, The World, The World Telegram* and *Visions* [11] were published during that time. Although none of them was a daily and many of them did not survive for long, that still represented quite an achievement for what, for most its early life, was a small Midwestern city. Only the *World* (1883-1932) and the *Freeman* (1884-1927) lasted long enough to make a difference. Of the others, 19 collapsed within a year and another 11 were gone within five years of being founded.[12]

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[10] Suggs, Henry L. (ed.). *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985*, Greenwood Press, Whitport, Conn., 1996, p.52.

[11] Ibid, p. 52

[12] Ibid, p. 53

Today there are a number of African American newspapers that are doing well in Indiana, including the *Indianapolis Recorder* (paid circulation 10,809) and *Indiana Herald East* (established 1959, paid circulation 10,000) in Indianapolis; *Gary Crusader* (established 1963, paid circulation 27,783) and *Gary Info* (established 1961, paid circulation 40,000), both in Gary; *Ft. Wayne Frost Illustrated* (established 1968, paid circulation 2,295) in Fort Wayne)[13] and *The Muncie Times* (established 1991 in Muncie, controlled circulation).

Because of its longevity, and the fact that it is one of only four black newspapers to have survived more than 100 years, the *Recorder* provides enough material to offer a study of how it was able to overcome obstacles and survive in what was generally a limited and hostile atmosphere. Part of the credit belongs to its co-founder, George Pheldon Stewart. He had no background in journalism but he was a shrewd businessman. According to material compiled by Wilma Gibbs, Stewart was active in business, politics (as a Republican Party activist) and in the church (as a member of the Bethel AME Church in Indianapolis).[14] He was a leader in many groups, including the Colored Republican Committee, Indiana Association of Colored Men and the Indiana chapter of the National Negro Business League. The *Recorder* was an extension of his business, political and personal interests. He used it to support the Republicans.

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[13] *Editor & Publisher International Year Book, 1994,* p. 11-88

[14] Material found in the George P. Stewart Collection at the Indiana Historic Society, Indianapolis, Ind.

In her master's thesis, Harlin concluded that the *Recorder* was not the state's first black newspaper but, indeed, was the state's longest surviving continuously published black newspaper.[15] To the list of other black publications of that era, Harlin added *Negro Year Book of 1902; Plaindealer* (established 1921), *Sunset Community Leader, Review and Spokesman.*[16]

Although some, such as Swedish sociologist Gunner Myrdal have criticized the black media for succeeding by playing up racial stories (the race card theory) often ignored by the majority white media[17] others have singled out the black media for doing uplifting stories about African Americans. The *Recorder*'s main emphasis was on local news and religious news and announcements. ItS focus was on stories oriented to its Indianapolis readers. That was the main reason for its success and survival. George Stewart was no altruist. He went into business to make money. The *Recorder* came about to make money for the publisher from advertising.[18] It started out as a 9-inch x 12-inch advertising sheet known as *The Directory.* In the beginning George Stewart and his brother, Clarence, sold advertising space in *The Directory.* Whatever space was left over was then filled with church announcements.[19] At that time, ad space was selling at 25 cents an inch. The circulation base consisted of Indianapolis churches, where the paper was delivered free. Eventually the paper began charging subscriptions of 50 cents a year, then $1 a year, 50 cents for six months and 25 cents for three months The paper was printed Saturday night for Sunday delivery. At that time circulation was estimated at 100 to 200.[20]

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[15] Harlin, Hartence, "The Indianapolis Recorder: A History of a Negro Newspaper," master's thesis presented for a master's degree in journalism from Indiana University, August 1951.

[16] Ibid, p. 2

[17] Myrdal, Gunner, *An American Dilemma.*

[18] Harlin, p. 7

[19] Ibid

The Recorder's Mission

The early *Recorder* was very clear about its purpose and readership. On its front it read, "A NEGRO NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COLORED PEOPLE OF INDIANA." An Oct. 20, 1927, editorial described its mission this way:

> The Negro paper is current history of the Negro people who need very much to know their history or achievement. And, at the same time, there is a grave necessity that sound, critical thinkers should have a hearing in the Negro press.... There is an ever growing need for constructive criticism, continuous, virile and cutting. Every Negro paper, as a progressive agency, should be open to this conviction."[21]

In that vein, the *Recorder* was not afraid to take on the Ku Klux Klan. Even though it supported the Republicans, that did not stop it from criticizing the party on issues on which the publisher disagreed with GOP policy. That, however, did not mean it became pro-Democratic Party.

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[20] Ibid, p. 8

[21] Ibid, p. 13

Just before the end of the 19th century, the paper's physical appearance had changed. It was now a regular sized newspaper with six columns, each column about 2 1/2 inches wide. Five columns were devoted to news, with the sixth being for ads. In the late 40s to the early 50s, the paper switched to an eight-column format. Today it is back to a six-column format.

By the early 20th century, the *Recorder's* circulation had also picked up considerably, although it would continue to fluctuate, depending on whose figures were used:

Table 1

Year:	Circulation:
1912	1,200
1921	8,235
1929	27,106
1932	21,950

Year:	N.W. Ayer & Sons' figures:	Editor & Publisher figures:
1935	5,423	4,561
1938	12,108	13,449
1942	13,721	14,105
1949	11,500	11,484

It is not clear why its circulation soared to over 27,000 in 1929, only to drop to 4,561 to 5,423 six years later, before rising again in 1938 and falling, again, in 1949. However, the paper remained fully aware of what it needed to do, if it wanted to remain a viable force, as illustrated by this October 9, 1928, editorial:

> The life blood of a newspaper is drawn from the commercial world--advertising maintains or sustains a newspaper. Heretofore, the Negro newspaper in its mediocrity was dependable on the Negro public in drawing the major portion of its advertising.
> As the Negro papers in the course of the last two decades began to take on the dress of metropolitan journals, they have been able to draw a larger and varied field of advertising. The advertising has not always been aesthetical or, what's more, even ethical. But the Negro newspaper has deserved the right to live.[22]

Besides a desire to make money, a distinguishing feature of the early *Recorder* was its political position. It was unwaveringly Republican, thanks to Stewart. In fact, between 1896 and Stewart's death in 1924, the paper had never supported a Democrat for office. Even in the post-George Stewart era, it remained solidly behind the GOP, except for supporting Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his third election to the presidency. But even that appeared to be an aberration because in 1948 presidential election, the paper backed GOP candidate Thomas Dewey against Democrat Harry Truman. Sometimes the paper was stridently anti-Democratic, as shown in Nov. 3, 1900, "The Colored Voters Catechism."[23]

This was a litany of reasons why blacks should support the GOP and oppose Democrats. The Democrats were blamed for most of the ills that had befallen blacks, from opposing the abolition of slavery to countenancing racism. The GOP was praised for ending slavery and opening up opportunities to blacks and supporting legislation that would benefit blacks.

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[22] Ibid, p. 18
[23] Ibid, p. 85-86

Despite Stewart's interests in civic, religious, fraternal and political matters, his paramount interest seemed to have been in his *Recorder*. He continued to pay attention to local and community news, while also making it clear that he did not care for national circulation. In the meantime,. on April 14, 1990, he doubled the size of his paper from four to eight pages.[24] By the early 20th century, the *Recorder* was beginning to attract more readers and Stewart had joined the National Negro Press Association.[25]

From the same George P. Stewart collection were found a certificate showing ownership of 3,000 shares of capital stock in the Colored North American Oil and Gas Co.; a letter from the paper's circulation department telling a Marion, Ind., resident that subscription rates were now $2 per year, $1 for six months and 50 cents for three months.[26]

The collection also showed that the reputation of the paper had spread to the point where news releases were being mailed to the *Recorder* from across the country. One, dated Jan. 22, 1920, came from the Hampton Press Institute in Hampton, Va., announcing that on Jan. 16 a Hampton team had defeated Shaw University 24 to 21.[27] An NAACP release asked blacks to write thank you letters to U. S. House of Representatives members, most of them Republicans, who had supported an anti-lynching law.

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[24] Ibid, p. 56

[25] A Feb. 4, 1917, letter from Nashville, Tenn., acknowledging receipt of his $5 membership fee. From the George P. Stewart Collection at the Indiana Historic Society.

[26] Ibid

[27] Ibid

But even more important was the national attention that the paper was beginning to receive from advertisers. G. P. Putnam's & Sons, a New York-based publisher and bookseller, wanted to advertise five condensed little books on The Art of Writing and Speaking the English Language. The Stirling Loan Co. of Indianapolis had loans for from $10 to $300 for those "that can not (sic) borrow from a bank." R. A. Richards of Chicago wanted to sell typewriter ribbons and carbon paper.[28] Dr. Pettit's offered pile treatments, while Macfadden Publications of New York was peddling a book, written by Bernard Macfadden, on Manhood and Marriage. Cornelius Printing Co. of Indianapolis wanted to sell equipment (including a press, cutter, folder, etc.) worth $1,775 to the *Recorder*, at terms that included $275 down and the rest in installments at a 6 percent interest rate[29]

Over the years, the *Indianapolis Recorder* has stayed true to its base and its strengths: emphasizing local, community, minister and religious news and seeking more advertising support. It still focuses on issues of race, church and society. National and international issues receive more prominent play when leaders, whether it is W. E. B. DuBois or Booker T. Washington in the past or South African President Nelson Mandela or civil rights activist the Rev. Jesse Jackson , come to Indianapolis. It gave great attention to local and state issues and social affairs of blacks. At least one full page was allocated to news from other Indiana cities.[30]

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[28] Ibid

[29] Ibid

[30] Suggs, The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985. p.58

The exploits of African Americans who had joined the army to help liberate Cuba in 1898 also received considerable coverage.[31] Such also was the case when a local African American did good. The adventures of Marshall Major Taylor, a renowned Hoosier bicyclist were well covered. Taylor received a lot of ink in 1901 when he beat 30 other riders in France and again in 1904 when he competed in an international meeting in Australia.[32]

After Stewart's death in August 1924, his wife, Fannie Caldwell Stewart took over as owner/publisher. Their son, Marcus C., who had graduated from Shortridge High School in Indianapolis and had attended Butler University, also in Indianapolis, became managing editor. Their daughter, Joyce Thomson was business editor, a position eventually assumed by her own son, George Thomson.[33] There were no real significant changes in the paper during those years, as the paper continued its co-founder's tried and proven formula for survival, by continuing local coverage and seeking to expand the advertising bases. There was the continued running of stories about the accomplishments of African Americans, education stories and the running of vital statistics. Wedding announcements were in a column titled a "Woman's World."[34]

In earlier editions, national and local news often were mixed on the front page. There was a "Race column," which explained and promoted black progress. Church news often ran on page 2.

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[31] Ibid

[32] Wilma Gibb's introductory notes to the George P. Stewart collection.

[33] Ibid

[34] Ibid

"From Around Indiana," which featured news about blacks from outside Indianapolis, ran on page 3. Society news and activities were on page 4.[35] The paper's contents hardly changed from week to week, although the names would. Editorials focused on race pride, civic pride, housing, city government, education, hospitals, recreation, criticism of the Ku Klux Klan[36] and sometimes of the federal government, if it was seen as not caring enough about blacks. Republican administrations were not immune from criticism.

By 1950 the Indianapolis Recorder Publishing Co., a privately owned group, that owned the *Indianapolis Recorder*, had $100,000 worth of equipment and employed 21 people.[37] Most of its news came from announcements, stringers, press releases, press associations and from reporters assigned to certain stories. The paper was also changing from relying almost exclusively on newspaper sales to where the editorial and advertising content had reached 50:50.[38] The *Recorder* was building a reputation which would see it into its first 100 years.

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[35] Ibid

[36] Hartence Harlin thesis, p. 53.

[37] Ibid

[38] Ibid

Long after George Stewart's death, the *Recorder* remained a family-owned publication until 1988, when Eunice Trotter bought the *Recorder*.[39] Trotter was a trained journalist. She had been one of the first African Americans to be hired by Central Newspapers, publishers of the morning *Indianapolis Star* and *Indianapolis News*, Indiana's largest newspapers. The two have since merged into the *Indianapolis Star and News*.

> Eunice, as a trained journalist, took a more well-rounded approach to how the *Recorder* covered the news. It became more of a traditional newspaper, still concentrating on local and community news, but moving away from sensationalized crime stories. That was a major change for the paper.[40]

Over the years, the *Recorder* had played up crime stories. According to Suggs, sometimes it had reported, by race, the number of Indiana inmates.[41]

Trotter held on to the paper for about two years, before selling it in 1990 to wealthy Indianapolis businessman William G. Mays, the current owner. Mays, owner of Mays Chemical Co. of Indianapolis, is listed as publisher since 1990. He is the paper's fourth publisher. His predecessors are: George P. Stewart, founding publisher/editor, 1895-1924; Marcus C. Stewart Sr., editor/publisher, 1925-83; no publisher is listed for 1983-88; Eunice Trotter, editor-in-chief/publisher, 1988-1990.[42]

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[39] Suggs, The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985, p. 64

[40] Personal interview in March 1997 with Charles Blair, *Recorder* editor

[41] Suggs, p. 66

[42] *Indianapolis Recorder* directory, December 23, 1995

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Mays appointed Charles Blair, whose background was in sales and who had headed a sports management company, to take over his new acquisition as president, general manager and editor-in-chief. Trotter stayed on for about six months, until almost the end of 1990, after the sale to give Blair hands-on experience about managing a newspaper.[43] He has settled well into his job. Today the *Recorder*, which had moved a number of times in its early years, employs 25 people and is ensconced in a stand-alone two-story brick building at 2901 N. Tacoma, Indianapolis, where it has been since 1975.. The paper has also undergone some major changes:

*Politically, beginning in the 1930s, the *Indianapolis Recorder*, had begun to cut its ties to the Republican Party[44], even though the majority of Indiana blacks still voted overwhelmingly for the GOP. It has become more independent. In 1976, it backed a Republican governor, Otis Bowen, for reelection and a Republican, Richard Lugar, for election as a U. S. senator.[45] However, it did not support the GOP or Democratic candidates for president and vice president.

> What has happened is that we have become politically independent. We don't automatically line up behind the Democratic or Republican parties. We take our position issue by issue. We are now issue oriented.
> Our editorials focus on issues, not specific matters. We rarely talk about specific legislation. Instead, we talk about public policy issues. For example, we are strongly opposed to capital punishment, because in Indiana 100 percent of the people on Death Row are represented by public defenders. So, poor people end up on Death Row, while the rich or those who can afford private attorneys do not end up on Death Row. We think it is unfair to target

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[43] Personal interview with Blair

[44] Suggs, p. 66

[45] Ibid, p. 68

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> poor people for Death Row. That is our focus now, public policy issues.
> The paper once was Republican.. because that was the party that supported abolition of slavery. (George) Stewart supported the Republicans on that and other issues. Stewart was a Republican. But sometimes he was also critical of the Republicans.. But you have to remember that the paper supported the Republicans at a time when the Democrats in Indiana were known to be racist.[46]

*Crime is no longer the top story in the paper. Blair said a study he did showed that in 1979-80 crime was the lead story for 52 weeks.[47] He said this represented a trend that reached a peak in the 60s and continued until the 80s, when crime stories dominated the front page. On December 23, 1995, the *Indianapolis Recorder* published its centennial edition. It was a major undertaking showing where it had been and where it was headed. On pages B4 and B5 of that edition it showed how the paper had previously covered crime. The deck and top headline in one old edition read:

> **2nd in 3 months**
> **Narcotics detective slain on dope raid**

Also featured on the same page, were mug shots of arrested blacks, a police squad car and a grainy photo of what appears to be a masked gunman. On the opposite page was picture of a barefoot black woman lying face down in a pool of blood. Such coverage was commonplace in earlier newspapers, said Blair.

> During that time our revenues depended 50 to 60 percent on paper sales. The ad revenue was controlled 100 percent by

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[46] Personal interview with Blair
[47] Ibid

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> whites. In the 40s, 50s and 60s we could not get white ads. Blacks did not exist as a market. Many major stores, including department stores, did not advertise with us. In the majority paper, ads are the main revenue source. Now we have shifted the odds, with ads making up 90 percent of our revenues and paper sales 10 percent. White companies now realize that we reach more than half of the 50,000 black households in Indianapolis. If they want to reach that market, they have to advertise with us.
>
> When black newspapers relied on paper sales for survival, there was a tendency sometimes to sensationalize crime stories because crime sold papers. We know crime sells. That is why the *National Enquirer* is so successful.
>
> We have shifted focus on that. We believe we have a certain responsibility to the community and we have to live up to that. We don't spend all our time reporting crimes because most blacks don't commit crimes. To focus only on crime would misrepresent our community.[48]

A glance at some issues of the *Recorder* shows it filled with supermarket, bank, clothing, telephone automotive retail, and classified ads. The centennial edition had ads from most of the major business groups in Indianapolis. Blair said the *Recorder's* circulation had stabilized at 15,000 subscribers of whom about 40 percent are white.

*In 1991 the paper finally got rid of its Old English masthead and adopted a more modern style. It now reads, *The Indianapolis Recorder*, ""Indiana's greatest weekly newspaper." A single copy costs 75 cents. Subscription rates are $39 a year in Indianapolis.

It now also uses color. Although it no longer has a race column, it still carries stories chronicling black successes, such as playing up stories about the Indiana Black Expo. Columnists on its editorial page

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[48] Ibid

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include Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, who writes on "To be equal" and Bernice Powell Jackson, who writes on the "Civil Rights Journal." The paper now carries a main section, a mixture of local and state stories, as it has always done, along with a sprinkling of national and international stories. It also has sections on arts and entertainment, sports, business and religion. There has been little change in the content, but it is better written, edited and focused.

Summary and Conclusions

The answer to the research question is that *The Indianapolis Recorder* has survived because of its adaptability. It has continued to make itself relevant to the African American experience. It has become a better written and better-edited publication run on business principals. It has recognized that it is not a national. black newspaper. Instead, it has concentrated on local news as its franchise.

It has adopted to technology. It has added color, redesigned its front page and masthead. It has also begun reaching out to the white community by seeking them out as subscribers and advertisers. The white community has responded favorably. It is also producing a high school sports section that covers all Indianapolis-area high schools, not just those with large African American student bodies. Politically it has shifted from being shrilly Republican to a more independent stance. These measures, plus the fact that its new publisher is a multi-millionaire, have helped *The Indianapolis Recorder* survive and prosper, even as some of its competitors and counterparts became defunct.

Explaining how the paper has survived this long and plans to continue being around, former Editor Blair said it was important to focus on changes that affect African Americans, because these give the paper a sense of purpose:

> We haven't forgotten that it was not too long ago when an African American could not get a cup of coffee in a restaurant here.
>
> We haven't forgotten about housing segregation. We haven't forgotten that Crispus Attucks High School was established as a black high school to
>
> segregate Indianapolis communities. We haven't forgotten that in the 1920s, Indianapolis was a very segregated city. We have a responsibility to focus on our history, to know where we have been and where we are going.
>
> We must measure present gains against our history, lest we forget. By showing positive things about ourselves, we feel good about ourselves and our communities.[49]

Blair argued that the future is bright for those African American newspapers that are willing to adapt and take advantage of new technologies and the new media. While refusing to predict whether the *Recorder* will be around for another 100 years, Blair was bullish about its immediate prospects. In 1995 the *Recorder* began publishing a glossy magazine supplement titled *EN* (Entertainment News). It also publishes *Sports Report,* which covers all Indiana high schools, black and white, which has helped the *Recorder* gain new subscribers. The paper has also started two television programs, "ROAR" (Recorder on the air) and "We are women." It has also done a feature film on racism at Indiana University. It has also released a documentary titled, "*The Indianapolis Recorder:* Eyewitness to a Century," a combination of newsreels, video, film and commentaries from scholars, ordinary people, past and present employees on the paper and its perceptions of black life in the United States and in Indiana. The footage includes the Ku Klux Klan, World War 1 and 2, the Civil Rights Movement and lynchings.

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[49] Ibid

According to Blair:

> These new products position us to remain competitive in the coming years. When we look down the road, 5 to 10 years from now, we think we can remain competitive if we are willing to change. Our new products give us visibility. They help the *Recorder* to remain visible. The paper is still our number one priority. But with the changes that technology has brought and with so many newspapers in trouble, I would not be surprised if one or more of these products, or even something that we have not thought about, might become more important than the *Recorder*.
>
> Right now, we are doing what the people want. We are giving them the products they want. Our TV program is one of the highest rated public affairs shows on TV.
>
> We have diversified, but we have not gone too far from our base. We believe that the things we have done up to now will take us into the next century. If we fail to recognize that newspaper readership has gone down, then we would be waiting to die. Newspapers are an archaic technology. If they have to survive, they must adapt. There is no telling how many of us are going to survive in the next century.[50]

The *Indianapolis Recorder*, which began its life as a one-page ad sheet at 518-520 Indiana Ave., Indianapolis, Ind., where it stayed for over 50 years, was named a historic site in journalism in 1995 by the Society of Professional Journalists. It was commended for its success in covering diversity and other cultural issues that were not always addressed by the city's mainstream media. It survived adversities that killed off many of its contemporaries, rivals and would-be successors. In 1994 it received a congratulatory Association award. The NNPA is a grouping of African American publishers.

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[50] Iibid

This is not the same *Indianapolis Recorder that* George Pheldon Stewart cha started. Today's paper has evolved politically while holding on to its business and circulation strategies. Its base and franchise have remained steadfast: local and community news. It has not abandoned coverage of African American issues, although it has become more inclusive. It has taken on more products, as it became a cleaner and better paper. The influences of Publisher William G. Mays and Blair are evident in some Of the changes and direction the paper is taking.

> We want to be around. We want to continue being relevant. Black newspapers don't have to disappear because times have changed. They just have to continue being relevant and willing to adapt. As long as we can do that, we should be able to survive. We have readers and advertisers who believe in us.[51]

The *Recorder* is also proud of its contributions to mainstream journalism. Its alumni are found all over the country, including *Washington Post* syndicated columnist William Raspberry, former Indiana Assemblyman William L. "Skinny" Alexander and Eunice Trotter, an editor, Kim Hooper, a writer, and Lynn Ford, a columnist and editor, all the *Indianapolis Star,* Indiana's largest daily newspaper.

The *Recorder,* according to Blair, is a valuable community institution that should be saved for the good of the community. It owes its longevity to its ability to adapt to changed circumstances and to reposition itself as a business that understands its community and its advertisers and the importance of using the latest media technology. Even as the *Indianapolis News*, the city's major afternoon paper prepares to fold in October because of declining circulation, leaving the field open to its larger morning sister, the *Indianapolis Star,* those at the *Recorder* are confident they will hold their own by doing what mainstream newspapers have done to survive in an increasingly competitive media market.

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[51] Ibid

Blair has since left the *Recorder*. He has been replaced by Mays' niece, Carolene Mays, whose background is not in journalism, but whose titles are president and general manager. Mays himself retains the title of publisher. No changes in philosophy, strategy or business direction are planned.

Questions for Further Study

Black newspapers, especially those that have survived for long periods offer a rich resource for understanding African American history and events, as seen through the eyes of those who often saw themselves as excluded from the mainstream (white) media. They interpreted and still interpret events from a black perspective and context. They offer insights into black thinking, black tactics and strategies. They offer news and information often not found elsewhere. They make it possible to get a more panoramic view of a multiracial and multi-ethnic United States.

They are also important to the journalism profession because, as mentioned above, they provided and still provide invaluable training and experience for African American journalists,. many of whom have moved on to the white-owned media. Without black newspapers, these people would have lacked the training, experience and credentials that made it possible to be hired and to make it in this competitive field.

(a) What do the five black newspapers that have survived for over 100 years have in common?

(b) What are some of the common traits and characteristics among the editors and publishers whose papers exist today?

(c) What are the most common reasons for the demise of many of these newspapers?

(d) Is there a place for ethnic newspapers in a country that wants to be a melting pot?

(e) Comparing *The Indianapolis Recorder's* survival strategy to how the city's mainstream newspapers have managed to continue in business.

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